Report of the the Committee on Cooley Emigration for Assam, Sylhet and Cachar, 1864

Emigration → India → Report

VIII/6

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE COOLIE EMIGRATION FOR ASSAM, SYLHET & CACHAR.

10, 3, 1863

To

S. C. BAILEY, Esquire,

Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

Sir,

Having received your letter No. 218, dated 14th January 1864, appointing us a Committee to investigate causes of the heavy mortality among a body of coolies recently despatched to Upper Assam on board the Steamer *Agra* and flat *Hooghly*, we have the honor of submitting herein the result of our enquiries for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor.

The several subjects noted in the 3rd and following paras. of your letter have been fully considered. The statements of the public officers and others concerned in the special inquiry whose attendance could be secured, have been obtained, and are appended hereto, as also the testimony of several officers and planters of the Tea districts and others in Calcutta concerned in the collection and despatch of laborers, whose views we desired to ascertain on the general question of the Labor Transport system as it exists, and the improvements of which it is susceptible.

The depôts in Calcutta have been personally inspected by members of the Committee, and the arrangements of the vessels scrutinized, and, as suggested in your 5th para, a member of the Committee was deputed to Kooshtea to examine the depôt and embarkation arrangements at that place.

The several communications received from time to time from Government are submitted in the Appendix. Several very great evils are brought to light in certain passages, which we have not thought it profitable to discuss in the body of the report, as their remedy would follow of necessity on the adoption of the general measure of reform, which we shall have to propose. Among these we may make prominent mention of the possible separation of members of the same family in the Tea districts, and the absence of special provision for the treatment of the sick on the plantations.

With these remarks we proceed to offer the specific conclusions at which we have arrived on the questions referred to us, commencing with the points brought forward in Mr. Campbell's letter.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servants.

H. A. COCKERELL,

A. PAYNE,

J. B. BARRY,

C. EALES,

REPORT.

1. On these points, severally, we are of opinion, that the charge of insufficient and improper diet provided in the Calcutta depôts and for the voyage, is wholly unproved. Captain Burnell and Dr. Macnamara state emphatically, that the provision made by the contractors is most liberal on all occasions, and no complaints have reached them on their inspections which have been frequent. This is confirmed by Captain Burnell's testimony as to the particular voyage, and generally by all the evidence which we have obtained.

2. With regard to the detention at Kooshtea, it appears from Captain Burnell's evidence, which is corroborated by that of Mr. Ryland, that the utmost detention of the coolies for this ship did not exceed two days, and that this is a very usual delay; this cannot therefore, we consider, be regarded as conducing to the mortality on the *Hooghly*, especially as the party of coolies who reached Kooshtea on the very day of the vessel's departure, suffered equally with those who preceded them.

3. That the hospital accommodation was in the *Hooghly*, as in other vessels, very deficient, and was rendered more so by the large number of sick, but we cannot connect this very closely with the prevalence of disease, which commenced so immediately after the embarkation of the people. Although we cannot doubt that more ample space could have been procured, as stated by Captain Burnell, had the Medical Officer shewn the smallest alacrity.

4. That the supply of medicines on board the *Hooghly* was arranged as usual. That there was no scarcity; that every precaution was taken to give the best security for quality, by procuring supplies from R. Scott, Thompson & Co., and Bathgate and Co., and that the assertion of the Native Doctor as to the uselessness of the medicines, and the peculiar instructions received by him from the Medical Inspector is entirely disproved by his own statement made in Calcutta, and by the evidence of Dr. Macnamara himself.

5. Respecting the want of shelter at Kooshtea for the party shipped on the *Hooghly*, we have no evidence to shew that the party were in any way peculiarly situated; and although we consider, as we shall hereafter point out that the arrangements at this place are very defective, and call for immediate amendment, we are unable to connect them with the mortality on this particular vessel.

6. That a number of men among the party were shipped in sickly condition there is no reason to doubt, and it cannot be doubted, moreover, that this fact contributed largely to the disastrous issue of the voyage. The reasons for this as based on the depôt system in use in Calcutta, we propose to set forth at length hereafter.

7. On the subject of the immediate causes of death, the evidence before us is unfortunately very inconclusive. The journal of the native medical officer is so very imperfect, both in its form and the manner in which it has been kept, that we are unable to arrive at any conclusion, as to the exact causes of death in his patients, while Mr. Doyle, the European medical officer furnishes us with no papers of the kind. But from the scattered information afforded by different individuals, it seems probable that there were many cases of rapidly fatal cholera, and others of a more protracted form of diarrhœa or dysentery. To either of these disorders the weakly condition of some of the coolies

must have rendered them peculiarly liable, while the stronger and healthier of the parties are said to have consisted largely of hill men of Chota Nagpore, a class well known to be predisposed in a very high degree to cholera in the climate of Lower Bengal. On the very important question, whether any of the coolies did or did not embark suffering from diarrhœa or dysentery, we find it impossible to form an opinion. We are aware of the extreme difficulty of guarding against such an occurrence where it is the object of all present at the inspection to deceive the Medical Inspector by concealing disqualifying diseases, and if coolies suffering from the disorder did embark, we can only regard the evil as inseparable from the present most defective system.

8. The clothing on this occasion, in the item of blankets, is admitted to have been inferior; but that this was not due to any neglect or systematic fault is sufficiently clear from the evidence of Captain Burbank on the state of the market at this particular time, corroborated, as it happens to be, by the experience of all the members of the Committee. The fact, however, being thus, we are forced to consider it as bearing in a very important degree on the mortality among the sickly portion of the coolies.

9. The facts of this disastrous voyage which have come to our knowledge then briefly stated, amount to this. A party of coolies, many of whom are in sickly condition, and many of the healthier belonging to a class peculiarly predisposed to the diseases of the plains of Lower Bengal set out from Calcutta. They are imperfectly clothed for the season, they pass through a district where miasmatic disease is prevalent, and are shipped on board a flat where although not unduly crowded in the ordinary acceptation of the term, they are so congregated that disease appearing among them must spread with the greatest rapidity. Cholera and dysentery break out immediately on embarkation, so rapidly in fact that a death takes place at the ghaut, and more follow in rapid succession. The hospital accommodation proves unequal to the emergency, and the medical officer in charge of the greater portion becomes totally incapable of discharging his duty. We see in these predisposing facts, and the results which followed them, only a repetition of old experience, for the situation of the men was precisely that which in marching troops and others has led to similar out-breaks of disease from the time when cholera first began to be studied; and whatever may be said of the immediate influence of cold and deficient clothing in hastening the death of the feeble men, we see no reason to penetrate into details of this description in search of a cause for the out-break of fatal miasmatic disease on board the *Hooghly*. It will presently be our duty to submit to the Government a full statement of the errors of system under which this fatal tendency appear to us to have fuller scope and force, and to propose measures for its amelioration, but before doing this we proceed, in the terms of the instruction we have received to investigate the manner in which the duties of the several public officers concerned have been discharged by them.

10. *Superintendents of Labor Transport.*—The statement furnished by the Superintendents at Calcutta and Kooshtea, will shew the view which they take of the duties they are called upon to perform, and we are unable to discover in the conduct of these officers in the case before us, any point in which the provisions of the Act have not been observed. The only fact established, which in respect of these duties could be regarded as having any connection with the sickly state of the laborers, was the bad quality and scanty size of the blankets supplied, and for this bad quality a strong reason had been advanced by Captain Burbank, viz., the impossibility of procuring better articles in the market at the time.

11. In these circumstances it is to be regretted that the Superintendent did not order a larger number of blankets to be supplied, and thus compensate at for their defective

quality. This might have been done in the exercise of a discretion, which could not have been disputed, although we feel bound in justice to Captain Burbank to remark, that neither by the Act nor by any order of Government is the clothing provided for the voyage placed under his control.

12. It cannot be denied that the absence of accommodation for the people at Kooshtea is a great evil as their detention there is for uncertain periods, but we are unable to ascribe this evil to any neglect of duty either on the part of the contractors or of the Superintendent at the place, inasmuch as the law does not require of either party the establishment of depôt there, we prefer, therefore, to leave this point for consideration with which we have to take the general objection to the existing system.

13. *Medical Inspector.*—We feel great difficulty in forming a distinct opinion as to whether the duties of this officer have or have not been fully discharged, from the absence of an undisputed standard for our guidance. Under Act III. Section 5. the Medical Inspector is required to inspect the depôts Under. Sect. 15. to examine laborers as to their state of health and certify accordingly, and in Sect. 16. it is implied that he shall ascertain that all persons setting out for the Tea districts are in a fit state of health to labor.

14. The first of these provisions we are convinced from our enquiry is regularly and efficiently carried out, that is, as regularly and efficiently as in the existing system is possible. The second and third points have given rise to much discussion, and the intention of the Act has been variously interpreted by those concerned in carrying it out, so that it is necessary for us to state here at length the points of doubt, in order to shew how the several charges brought against the Medical Inspector may be well founded without involving him in any direliction of what he, in concert with the Superintendent, has considered to be his duty.

15. It appears that on the first appointment of Medical Inspector being made, the officer nominated, Dr. Macnamara waited on Mr. Secretary Eden, to receive definite instruction as to his duties, emoluments, &c., and was informed verbally that his office was to be considered as in every way analogous to that of the Medical Inspector of Colonial Emigration. He was at the same time furnished with a copy of the proposed rules for the management of labor depôts under Section 5 of Act. III, to one of the conditions of which, viz., that contained in para. VIII fixing the minimum interval between his visits, Dr. Macnamara demurred; proposing as an amendment that the visits should be made as often as might be required. To this Mr. Eden, was understood by Dr. Macnamara to agree but no amended copy of the rules has up to the present time appeared, nor has he received any further written instructions on the subject.

16. It will be seen that this arrangement by placing the Medical Inspector of laborers in the position occupied by the Medical Inspector of Colonial Emigrants, assigned to the former an office which is, in a most essential point, at variance with that which the Act (in Section 16) clearly contemplates, inasmuch as the latter officer being attached to the office of Protector of Emigants, is independent altogether of the recruiting agency, and exercises over the agency a power of veto on the despatch of any person who may appear to him to be unfit for the voyage, but is distinctly prohibited from interference in the selection of coolies for labor. Whereas the Act, in the Section above cited, implies that the function should be discharged by the Inspector of laborers, a view which is evidently adopted by the authorities of the Tea districts and forms the basis of the charges brought against the Medical Inspector in the several communications before us.

17. The particular body of coolies shipped on board the *Hooghly* does not appear from the evidence before us to have differed very materially in physical capacity from other shipments, but it is freely admitted by Dr. Macnamara, that cases of the kind reported may have been among the number on this as on other occasions; the prevention of this, under the view which has taken of his duty he would not consider himself called upon or authorized to effect.

18. In the absence of an undisputed standard by which we could compare Dr Macnamara's performance of his duties with the intention of Government, we are unable, as we have said, to pronounce an opinion on the subject, but however great the defect of system may be, which leaves the Medical selection of laborers unprovided for, we are forced to conclude from the salary attached to his office and the fact of its being made a mere adjunct to other onerous duties that the Government did not intend to exact from its holder any more laborious task than that which Dr. Macnamara considers that he undertook. If we are correct in this conclusion, we feel bound to acquit Dr. Macnamara of all dereliction of duty in respect of the non-selection of laborers.

19. The charge of bad medical supplies has already been disposed of, and for the failure of Mr. Doyle in the discharge of his duties we cannot regard the Medical Inspector as responsible, seeing that every precaution was taken to secure a competent person, and the certificates produced by Mr. Doyle were such as to lead to the conclusion that he was so. But with reference to the alleged insufficiency of the hospital accommodation on board the *Hooghly*, and of the arrangements for the sick generally, we are unable fully to acquit either the Superintendent or Medical Inspector in Calcutta. The Superintendent in providing hospital accommodation did not consider it necessary to make any further provision than that of measuring out a certain space for the purpose, nor to bring the sanitory arrangements of the vessel in any way under the observation of the Medical Officer, and the Medical Inspector considers himself exempt from all duty or responsibility connected with the vessel.

20. Now while we observe that the Act itself makes no provision for such responsiblity on his part, we are quite unable to reconcile a belief in this exemption with the admission elsewhere made that the duties imposed on the Medical Inspector of laborers were to be precisely similar to those laid down for the Inspector of Emigrants, among which it is distinctly provided that the internal fittings of the vessel and arrangements for ventilation, the clothing of the coolies and the arrangements for the hospital and for insuring cleanliness, shall form an important part of the Medical Inspectors duty; who, it is also ruled, shall superintend in person the embarkation of the people.

21. The least that can be said, we think, is, that in the presence of conflicting instructions and differences of interpretation of orders of such kind that confusion must sooner or later inevitably arise, it is much to be regretted that the officers concerned did not take early steps to remove all doubt on the subject of their duties by representing to the Government the difficulty in which they felt themselves to be involved.

22. With regard to the Medical Officer at Kooshtea, we find that he is placed in a somewhat anomalous and awkward position. Coolies who have left the Calcutta depôts only a few hours, certified to be fit to undertake the voyage by the Medical Inspector here, are presented for inspection at Kooshtea, and it is natural for Dr. Grant to conclude that all persons so treated who are not absolutely too ill to embark, are intended by the authorities to proceed, so that unless it can be clearly shewn that persons were suffered by Dr. Grant to embark in a state of active disease, and that disease contracted after

caving Calcutta, we could not hold him responsible for the condition of the people on board the *Hooghly*. No allegation even of this kind has been made, and we feel bound to record our impression that the duties of this officer have been most promptly and regularly performed as far as the circumstances of his position allowed of his performing them.

23. We proceed to bring forward in detail the defects which in our opinion are in existence in the present system, and which we consider to be inseparable from it.

24. That the large number and scattered and remote situations of the depôts render effective supervision, either general or medical, an impossibility, and if this be so in the existing state of things, the future holds out prospect of still greater evils, as there would seem by the Act to be no limit to the number of possible depôts, the Superintendent being required to give licenses to all comers in the absence of positive reasons to the contrary.

25. That the same state of things, by placing the control of the depôts in the hands of contractors who are interested in the dispatch of the largest possible number, gives ample opportunity for the continuance of evils which were strongly deprecated by the committee assembled for a similar purpose with ourselves in 1861-62 ; and the terms in which the committee then reported are found by the evidence submitted in our appendix, to have full application to the circumstances which we have now again to bring to notice, in connexion with the depôt system.

26. The depôt, it is true, are not now conducted with the reckless and purposeless disregard amount of common humanity which were denounced in the establishment of Thakoor Lalla, and the improvement in this respect is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the supervision that is afforded by the officers appointed for the purpose, and the other provisions of the Act in force ; but still it is but too evident, that where it is the interest of contractors to deceive the inspecting officer, they enjoy every facility of doing so, and a very cursory examination of the evidence before us is sufficient to shew that there is no security, or very little indeed, for the physical fitness of coolies dispatched for labor, or even for embarkation, since there is no check whatever on the power of the contractor to change any number of the people passed by the Medical Inspector, between the time of his inspection and their departure, and in lieu of the healthy and able-bodied to substitute invalids and incapables, and that this actually occurs is, we think, rendered more than probable by the testimony of officers and planters of the tea districts, while the universal complaints of the high proportion of ineffectives which reach these districts would seem to indicate, that such a fraud is by no means uncommon.

27. That there is not, on the part of the laborers, before leaving Calcutta, a clear understanding of the terms of their engagements, and although the provisions of the Act are distinct on the subject of the terms being fully explained to the laborer by the recruiter before he leaves his own district, and it is distinctly enjoined on Magistrates registering laborers that they shall ascertain that this has been done, it is undeniable that false impressions and expectations prevail among individual laborers in many instances up to the time of their arrival on the plantations. Nor is it difficult to understand how this may take place. The recruiter and recruit appears together before the registering officer, and agree on the terms to be paid for labor, and this understanding the Magistrate attests, but he does not and cannot secure to the laborer the faithful observance of the terms agreed upon before him, and the recruiter, therefore, is at liberty, under cover of his attestation to deceive the cooly by promises as extravagant and as delusory as any he could have offered before the law was passed.

28. Medical inspection now performed is unsatisfactory and insufficient. It leaves the selection of laborers confessedly unprovided for, and gives no security for the identity of the people despatched.

29. That the voyage and the arrangements for it still remain in the hands of contractors and their employés. That frauds in the issue of provisions and in other articles of supply may and do arise from this cause, as pointed out in the report of the Committee already quoted, and that the evils consequent on this error are only mitigated in one or two points, by the provisions of the Act, whereas they appear to call imperatively for entire suppression.

30. That the mischievous practice still continues of payment being made to these contractors on account of coolies who die on the voyage equally with those who survive it, affording, as also shewn by the Committee of 1862, a premium on mortality, and a strong inducement to falsify returns by representing desertions as deaths, a fraud against which the medical papers furnished by the native doctors, from the form and manner in which they are kept, afford no security whatever.

31. That the provision for medical attendance on the voyage is on a very unsatisfactory footing. The impossibility of procuring medical men of character who would undertake such a charge, leaves the duty in the hands of a class, many of whom, from ignorance and dishonesty, are totally disqualified for it.

32. These observations apply also to the native churrundars and others in whose hands the issue of provisions for the voyage is placed, no one being held responsible for the observance of even the most ordinary sanitary precautions on board the vessels.

33. The above defects of management we consider to be inseparable from the central system as it now exists, and we are most strongly of opinion that no modifications of the system will prove effectual in remedying the evils which we have attempted to indicate; and having given the entire subject our fullest and most deliberate consideration, we feel convinced that the remedy is to be found only in a total abolition of the depôt and contract system, and the establishment of a central agency, based on the plan of the Colonial Emigration agencies of Calcutta, as recommended by the Committee of 1862. In the words of the Committees Report "we feel that in recommending at once a broad measure of this kind to the attention of the Government, we are treating the requirements of the case more appropriately and effectually than we should have done by proposing remedies in detail for the several deficiencies that we have noticed," and it is a source of satisfaction to us, that we are enabled to bring forward this recommendation from a more advantageous position than that occupied by the former Committee, inasmuch as, from the evidence before us, it is clear, that the objections which were then urged by the representative of the planters to the establishment of an agency have since disappeared.

34. It is undeniable we think that by centralizing and co-ordinating the proceedings of the large and increasing number of planters in their endeavours to obtain laborers, we consult their interests in, at least, an equal degree with those of the laborers. As the demand for laborer increases from month to month, and the necessities of the planters grow more and more urgent, the number of persons concerned intermediately in procuring the laborer increases in a ruinous ratio. Crimps in every form and disguise are at work to share the profits of recruitment, and they carry on their trade so indirectly, that they defy detection and the provisions of the law. The numbers of legitimate contractors and recruiters are of necessity increased and the competition which follows produces an augmentation of recruiting charges which is most prejudicial to the interests of the employers.

35. Were this progressive increase no more than a legitimate rise in the price of labor following on a new and rising demand for it, we should regard it only as an

indication of advancing agricultural prosperity, and feel but little disposition to adduce it as a ground for reformation. But this is not so. The increased cost to the planters of obtaining an effective workman, and the burthen of maintaining the sick and feeble, does not, we are persuaded, represent higher value fairly paid by the employés and realized by the servant, but the augmented payments merely go to satisfy the demands of recruiters and crimps, whose numbers are now so largely swollen by the separate and contending action of planters and their agents in Calcutta, and no benefit whatever is derived by the laborer from the high price paid for his recruitment. Laboring alike under the disadvantages resulting from such a system as this, it is easy to see how planters and laborers may be expected to reap the benefit of the uniformity and organization of a central agency, where the presiding officer intimately acquainted with the wants of every plantation, and the *bonâfide* cost of supplying them can not fail in the course of a reasonable time to command, as he must create the market for labor.

36. Holding this view as to the only change that will prove effectual against the deficiencies and abuses in existence, we shall carry out to the greatest present advantage, the instructions conveyed in your 8th para, by stating the manner in which, in our opinion, the agency should be constituted, reserving all specific rules for the conduct of the officers until it be known whether the fundamental change we have proposed meet with the sanction of Government; as it would be inappropriate to base on a system which we condemn from its root proposals which could only operate in amending its details.

37. The agent would be an officer of Government appointed and paid as agents of the Colonial Government are. In the selection, the Government would doubtless find it expedient to consult the wishes of those concerned. (The Land holders and commercial Association.) He should give his undivided attention to the business of the agency, holding no other duties or appointment whatever, and his action should be under the supervision and control of the Protector of Emigrants. The planters recruiting each for his own estate, employing recruiters known to themselves or engaged through their agents in Calcutta, should occupy with reference to the Government agent precisely the position which Mauritius Sugar* planters occupy with the Colonial agency. It may be left optional with them to forward requisitions to the agency leaving the collection and despatch of the people in the hands of the agent from beginning to end, or having arranged for the recruitment of their people to convey them to the general depôt, and entrust them to the agent for proper selection, proper care during detention in Calcutta, and proper arrangements, general and sanitary, for the voyage to the Tea districts.

38. A medical superintendent should be attached to the agency, and like the agent, should be appointed and paid by the Government, his residence should be at the depôt, with him should rest the entire control of all that affects the health of the coolies in Calcutta and on the voyage. The conservancy of the depôt, the lodging, clothing, food and bathing of the people, the inspection of vessels proceeding directly from Calcutta, the ventilation on board, allotment of space, hospital accommodation, clothing, supplies, dietary and medicine, and the direction of medical officers in charge of the subordinate establishment. He also should be prohibited from any other employment, the subordinate establishment which the agency would require, must be left to be determined after the extent of the transaction of the agency shall have become known.

39. The cost of such an establishment might, we think, be adjusted, as it is by the Colonial Governments, that is by dividing all expences among the requisitionists, in

* Mauritius is specified here as the Committee are in possession of the fullest information respecting the relations in question in this particular Colony.

the proportion of the number of laborers demanded year by year, and there can be little doubt that this would very shortly be compensated to the planters in the reduction of the unnecessary and unprofitable recruitment charges now levied upon them.

40. As an accessory establishment and in complete subordination to the Calcutta agency, we would advise the creation of a sub-agency and depôt at Kooshtea, for the reception of coolies from Calcutta, their lodgement and care during the necessary detention at the place, and for the making of due provision for the voyages of vessels starting from Kooshtea. A sub-agent and medical officer should be attached to this establishment, and their proceedings should be under the direction of the agent and medical officer in Calcutta, whose responsibility for the conduct of the sub-agency should be complete.

H. A. COCKERELL,

A. PAYNE,

J. B. BARRY,

C. EALES,

APPENDICES.

No. 220.

FROM S. C. BAYLEY, ESQ.,

Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal,

To

Fort William, the 14th January 1864.

Revenue.

SIR,

I AM directed to inform you that the Lieutenant-Governor has been pleased to nominate you to be of a Committee appointed to investigate the causes of the heavy mortality among a body of coolies recently despatched to Upper Assam on board the Steamer *Agra*.

2. I am to forward you the Report of the Commissioner of Assam on the subject, together with its enclosures, containing the statement of Mr. Campbell, who was a passenger in the Steamer *Agra*, and that of Dr. Thorp, the Medical Officer, who inspected the coolies on their arrival at Gowhatty.

3. Your enquiries should be mainly directed to two subjects:—

1*st*.—The causes which in this particular instance led to such a lamentable loss of life.

2*nd*.—The improvements which may be made in the system under which coolies for Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, are kept in depôt here and at Kooshtea, with a view specially to enforce an efficient medical inspection of them; and in the arrangements which are adopted on vessels conveying them to their destination.

4. On the first point your report should contain a complete statement as to how far the duties assigned to the Superintendent of Labor Transport and Medical Inspector of Laborers by the law and the rules in force were in the present case carried out by those officers, respectively, here and at Kooshtea, and if the terrible mortality that has occurred is in any way to be attributed to their neglect.

5. It may be found expedient, I am to suggest, that one member of the Committee should be deputed personally to Kooshtea, both to inspect the depôt and embarkation arrangements at that station, and also to examine the Superintendent and Medical Inspector in reference to the present case.

6. With reference to the second point to which your enquiries are to be directed, I am instructed to forward you copies of the Rules which have been approved by the Lieutenant-Governor for the control of the Coolie Depôts, and also of the Report of a Committee lately appointed to consider the amount of space which should be allotted to each coolie on a Steamer or Flat proceeding to Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet.

7. It has occurred to the Lieutenant-Governor that, in revising the present system of both Depôt and Transport arrangements, the Committee may find some useful suggestions in the Rules which regulate the inspection and transport of Emigrants to the Colonies; a copy of these Rules, including those concerning the duties of the Government Medical Inspector, is therefore forwarded herewith.

8. The Lieutenant-Governor desires, I am to add, that, in reporting on this subject, your Committee will furnish, for his approval, a complete set of Rules for the control and inspection of depôts; for the proper supply, both in depôt and on the voyage, of a sufficiency of food and clothing to the coolies; for the rejection and return of the unfit and invalids among them before embarkation; for the hospital and sanatory arrangements of the vessel in which they proceed being satisfactory; for the supply of medical stores and comforts being complete and capable of meeting all requirements; and for the provision on board of due medical attendance and establishments.

9. Copies of the correspondence will be forwarded to the Superintendents of Labor Transport and Medical Inspectors both at Calcutta and Kooshtea, with instructions to attend the Committee when called upon, and to furnish you with all the information and assistance in their power.

10. A copy will also be sent to the India General Steam Navigation Company and to the Assam Company, and to the employers of the Agents by whom these coolies were despatched, with a request that they will direct the attendance of those of their servants whom you may desire to summon, and that they will assist you with all the information that you require.

I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

S. C. BAYLEY,

Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

From MAJOR W. AGNEW, Officiating Commissioner of Assam, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal,—(No. 9, dated 20th December 1863.)

SIR,

IT having come to my notice, on the arrival of the Steamer *Agra* on the 14th instant, that much sickness had prevailed amongst the imported laborers on board on their way up to Assam, I directed an inquiry to be made into the cause thereof, and have the honor to submit the following report on the subject for the information of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor :—

2. The laborers, 342 in number, were all engaged for Tea Factories in Upper Assam, and were shipped by the Agents named in the margin. When put on board the Steamer they should have been in good health and in every respect fit to undertake the voyage ; but instead of being so, they were debilitated by previous sickness and starvation, as too soon became apparent from the mortality that at once broke out amongst them, resulting in forty-three deaths during the ten days the steamer took to reach this station from Kooshtea.

Assam Company.
Bennerts and Company.
French and Company.
Chunder Baboo.

3. My Assistant, Mr. Campbell, happened to be a passenger on board the steamer, and was at some pains to ascertain the cause of this truly lamentable loss of life. His personal observation shewed him that many of the emigrants must have been suffering from one form or another of disease when shipped, the correctness of which conclusion is fully established by the opinion expressed by Dr. Thorp, the Civil Surgeon here, who says :— "Amongst the coolies now on board are several who are diseased, and will never be able to do a single day's work ; these men are not suffering from recent illness, but their complaints are of long standing, such as old and foul ulcers of the legs, enlarged spleen, and secondary syphilis. None of these men should have been sent on board, and certainly could never have been passed by a medical man." Mr. Campbell also learnt on enquiry from the people themselves, and from the chupprassees in charge of them, that the only food they got in the Calcutta depôts for several days before they were forwarded to Kooshtea for embarkation was *choorah* and *goor*. It would also appear from enquiries he made that some batches of the laborers were sent to Kooshtea in expectation of the steamer starting on the date first advertised for its departure, and that they were kept during the intervening time unsheltered and fed on the unwholesome diet above-mentioned, which causes, together with the wretched clothing supplied, regarding which I quote Dr. Thorp's opinion in the margin, undoubtedly led to so extraordinary and lamentable mortality as 12 per cent. of deaths in ten days, and that too at the healthiest season of the year and with a total absence of Cholera.

"The blankets supplied to the coolies are small and of the worst possible description ; they are about two and half feet wide only, and do not afford any protection against the cold and damp of this season of the year.

4. Sickness, however, having broken out, I have now to acquaint His Honor with the nature of the preparations made to check disease, and to minister to the wants of the sufferers. Mr. Campbell says;—"The accommodation for the sick on board of the Flat was totally insufficient. There were no charpoys, or bed-pans, or any other of the requisites usually provided even for paupers, a small portion of the deck, seven feet by eight only, being partitioned off with canvas, and in this place, which was called an hospital, I found on my first visit to it nine human beings huddled close to each other and actually perishing from want of care. The spectacle was indeed a most lamentable one, and on my noticing the subject shortly afterwards to the European Medical Officer in charge, he told me that the place I referred to was only intended for such of the men as were past recovery, and that as it was close to the ship side the dead bodies could be thrown over without alarming the other coolies, which explanation, I beg to state, however, appeared most unsatisfactory, as some of the occupants of the apartment I have attempted to describe seemed not unlikely to recover if they had been properly tended and removed from the filth and stench in which they were lying. I beg to quote in the margin a list of medicines allowed for hundred coolies for Cachar or Assam, and it will be seen that Cholera and Dysentery pills are almost all the provision made for two diseases of a most virulent kind which are very apt to break out amongst emigrants. I was told by the Native Doctor that his instructions were to use the above pills for *all* complaints of the bowels, but that he had ceased to do so, as he had found they were of no use. He attributed this to the probability of the Native Compounder in the Chemists' shops in which the pills were prepared having appropriated some of the components of the medicines, which he thought they had re-placed with dough or some other harmless substance." Dr. Thorp on the same subject observes:—"I do not think sufficient room is allowed to the coolies: they are packed close, and when a man is taken ill he is unable to reach the stern of the Flat to ease himself, and consequently soils the deck and his neighbours. There is no hospital accommodation on board, with the exception of a place about 9 by 6 enclosed by a canvas screen; sick and well are all packed together, and this tends in no small degree to frighten and affect those who otherwise would pass through the trial safely. The medicines supplied for the use of the coolies is not sufficient, and many medicines, such as Dover's powder, Ipecacuanha, Opium, Compound Chalk with Opium, are wanting. Bed-pans are urgently needed, as are also urinals." In fact nothing could have been more incomplete than the provision made to meet the ordinary amount of sickness to be expected amongst imported Laborers, while the occurrence of such a thing as an epidemic seems to have been ignored altogether, and the same remarks, no doubt, apply to every steamer that carries emigrants into Assam.

Adhesive Plaster	...	1 yard.
Calomel	..	2 drams.
Castor Oil	...	2 quarts.
Chiretta	...	5 lbs.
Cholera Pills	...	200
Compound Jalap Powder		1 oz.
Carbonate Ammonia	...	½ oz.
Dysentery Pills	...	200
Gregory's Powder	...	1 oz.
Linseed Meal	...	2 lbs.
Mustard	...	½ lb.
Laudanum	...	2 oz.
Quinine Solution	...	4 oz.
Sweet Spirits of Nitre	...	2 oz.
Simple Ointment	.	½ lb.
Sulphur Ditto	...	1 lb.
Sulphate of Copper	...	½ oz.
" Zinc	...	1 oz.
Tincture Cardamum	...	2 oz.
Turpentine	...	4 oz.
Tartar Emetic	...	4 oz.

5. It is very evident that the humanic provisions of Act III. are very ill attended to ; indeed in this instance they appear to have been wholly disregarded, and that not only by the Contractors, who of course are always on the watch to evade them, but even by the Officers appointed and paid to prevent such evasion ; for, I presume, it is the duty of the Superintendent of Labor Transport and of the Medical Inspector to see that the provisions of Section 5 of the Act are duly enforced, and to take care that the Laborers are suitably lodged, fed, and clothed, and also that they receive medical attendance to the different depôts. The Contractors no doubt will affirm that food and clothing supplied was of good quality, and in regard to the former it would be difficult prehaps to prove the contrary, although we may judge it was so from the state of health the laborers were in when shipped ; but fortunately no such uncertainty exists in regard to the description of clothing supplied, which was simply infamously bad and disgraceful in the last degree to every one connected with the Labor Transport Department, an opinion that I have no doubt will be shared in by His Honor when he sees the enclosed sample of the blankets given to the Laborers, which I am assured by Mr. Campbell and Dr. Thorp is a very fair specimen indeed of the quality of those that were supplied. Again, as regards medical inspection, it is evident from what Dr. Thorp says, that the thing is a dead letter, as otherwise men would not have been found suffering from old standing diseases who are not only unfit now, but who never will be fit to do a day's work on a Tea Plantation. But it is of the last importance, not only in the interests of humanity, but also for the protection of Planters, that this most important duty should not be slurred over in a perfunctory manner, and I am confident, the fact of its being so performed has only to be brought to His Honor's notice to ensure a remedy being at once applied.

6. Eleven of the Laborers whose cases presented the worst features have been landed here and are under medical treatment, and forty good blankets, and a supply of a better description of dall than that in use, was sent on board. These measures will tend to relieve the sufferings and check the mortality amongst the present batch of Laborers ; but it seems necessary to devise means to protect future importations from being similarly decimated.

7. Rigidly conscientious medical inspection is the first thing called for, as without it the mortality must always be heavy, and close supervision of the Calcutta Depôts, and of the treatment the laborers meet with there, is of hardly less importance. If these duties be properly performed the laborers will at least embark in good health, and there is little fear in that case of disease breaking out amongst them on board ; but nevertheless, proper hospital accommodation should be insisted upon, with a sufficient supply of medicines, charpoys, bed-pans, urinals, spare blankets, and medical comforts, &c. As suggested by Dr. Thorp, greater care also seems to be required in the selection of the medical men put in charge of the Labor-

ers, the person sent up in that capacity on the present occasion being unfit, it seems, to have a medical charge of any kind whatever. I would also suggest that the systematic postponement of the departure of the Steamers be put a stop to, or, if that cannot be done, that suitable shelter be provided at Kooshtea for the Laborers while they are detained there awaiting the Steamer's departure.

From E. C. THORP, ESQ., M. D., Civil Surgeon, Gowhatty, to CAPTAIN THOMAS LAMB, Deputy Commissioner of Kamroop,—(dated the 11th December 1863.)

SIR,

IN compliance with your Memorandum of this day's date, I proceeded on board the Flat *Hooghly*, in tow of the India General Steam Navigation Company's Steamer *Agra*, to enquire into the cause of the mortality amongst the coolies since their departure from Kooshtea, and have the honor to submit the enclosed Report handed to me by the Medical Officer in charge, and the following remarks on the shipping and carriage of coolies :—

1. The coolies are shipped by Agents in Calcutta, whose sole object seems to be to ship as many men as possible without any regard to their health at the time, or their fitness for field labor, the Agents deriving their profits from the number shipped by them. Amongst the coolies now on board are several who are diseased and will never be able to do a single day's work; these men are not suffering from recent illness, but their complaints are of long standing, such as old and foul ulcers of the legs, enlarged spleen, and secondary syphilis: none of these men should have been sent on board and certainly could never have been passed by a medical man.

2. I do not think sufficient room is allowed to the coolies: they are packed close, and when a man is taken ill he is unable to reach the stern of the Flat to ease himself and consequently soils the deck and his neighbours.

3. The food of the coolies is good and abundant, but I would suggest that the urrur dall at present used should be changed for some sort to which the coolies are more accustomed, and which is more easily digested. The dall supplied by Mr. French was bad and certainly unfit for use.

4. There is no hospital accommodation on board with the exception of a place about 9 × 6 enclosed by a canvas screen: sick and well are all packed together, and this tends in no small degree to frighten and affect those who otherwise would pass through the trial safely

5. The medicines supplied for the use of the coolies is not sufficient, and many medicines, such as Dover's Powder, Ipecacuanha, Opium, Compound Chalk with Opium, are wanting. Bed-pans are urgently needed, as are also urinals.

6. The blankets supplied to the coolies are small and of the worst possible description: they are about 2½ feet wide only, and do not afford any protection against the cold and damp of this season of the year.

I would suggest that a portion of the deck should be set apart for the hospital, that it should be provided with boards raised from the deck or tuktaposhes for the sick, and that there should be a proper supply of extra blankets, &c., bed-pans, and urinals, and medical comforts, such as sago, arrowroot, spirits, &c., should be supplied to the men in hospital instead of the ordinary diet.

Privies should be built on every Flat used for the conveyance of coolies, with a shoot to carry off all excreta, and this should be carefully cleaned every morning and evening,

and purified with Chloride of Lime. The decks should also be strewn with Chloride of Lime at least every other day.

The Flat *Hooghly* is well adapted for the conveyance of coolies, were the suggestions I have made carried out.

The mortality seems to have arisen solely from the men being shipped in a bad state of health, and not being sufficiently provided with warm clothing. The Captains both of the Flat and Steamer appear to have done all in their power to promote the comfort of the coolies, but they were unable to supply what was most urgently required, *viz.*, warm clothing. The Medical Officer in charge does not appear to have exerted himself as he should, and I think that in future there should be at least one Native Doctor to every hundred coolies, and that each should be assisted by a Dresser ; the whole to be under the orders and supervision of an experienced European Medical Officer.

There ought certainly to be a coolie hospital at Gowhatty, and every cargo of coolies should be carefully examined on reaching that station ; the sick and weak should be landed and placed in hospital, and forwarded to their destination when convalescent, and those considered unfit for labor should be sent back to Calcutta.

From R. T. St bie, Esq., m. d., and Lieutenant F. H. Hood, to the Commander of the Falt *Hooghly*,—(dated the 9th December 1863.)

Dear Sir,

We the undersigned passengers on board the Steamer *Agra*, do not consider Mr. Doyle a fit person to be in charge of the coolies.

On the 7th instant he was intoxicated and incapable of rendering medical assistance to them, and we think you will be perfectly justified in making over medical charge of them to a competent Medical Officer. We believe that Mr. Doyle is totally incompetent to hold medical charge of the coolies, and that the great mortality amongst them (under his charge) is solely attributable to his gross neglect.

Not being able to sign the remarks above, I affirm that on the morning of the 8th, at about 8 a. m., Mr. Doyle was lying in among the coolies asleep in an improper manner.

H. G. Oldham, *Lieutenant*

I believe from what I have noticed that the great mortality amongst the coolies was owing, in a great measure, to Mr. Doyle's neglect, and I have seen him in such a state as to be unfit to attend to his medical duties.

J. Warren,

W. H. Bennett.

I saw Mr. Doyle quite drunk in the afternoon of the 7th instant, and I certainly consider him to be an improper person to be in medical charge of the coolies.

A. Campbell.

From observations made by me, I consider Mr. Doyle quite incompetent to have medical charge of the coolies at present under his care, and I think the Commander would be quite justified in removing him.

A. Campbell,
Personal Asst., Commr. of Assam.

From P. J. Doyle, Esq., Medical Officer in charge of coolies on board the flat *Hooghly*, to Dr. E. C. Thorp, Gowhatty,—(dated the 14th December 1863.)

Sir,

I have the honor to submit a Report explaining the cause of mortality among the coolies on board the Flat *Hooghly*.

Out of a total of 259 coolies under my medical charge, thirty have died from the following diseases:—

Choleric Diarrhœa	18
Dysentria Chronic	12

Choleric Diarrhœa.

Symptoms.—Severe purging, watery evacuations almost resembling the color of rice water, inordinate thirst, countenance anxious, extremities cold, slight irritability of stomach, unable to retain food, small, irregular, and thready pulse, gradual prostration of the vital powers, collapse, death.

Treatment.—Stimulants, rum and water, ætherial draughts, Cholera pills (contained in the medicine box supplied for coolies), turpentine friction to extremities, hot water bottles, tea, arrowroot.

Dysenteria Chronic.

Symptoms.—Frequent visits to stool, tenesmus and tormina, vomiting, cold extremities, cold and partial sweats, tongue red and dry, motions very fœtid bloody and slimy, involuntary evacuations, intermitting pulse, thirst.

Treatment.—Cholera pills contained in medicine chest and recommended for advanced stage of dysentery, Sugar of Lead and Opium, weak rum and water, rum mixed with sago and arrowroot, tea, hot water bottles.

Anatomical Characters.—As I performed no *post-mortem* examinations I cannot testify to any such fact.

I must now advance reasons and grounds evincing the cause of such terrible mortality.

I state for a fact that the *predisposing cause* of disease among the coolies is owing to their being previous sufferers in the depôt at Calcutta before embarkation at Kooshtea, and the exciting cause, severe cold, want of clothing, debility of frame, succumbing irresistably to any attack of disease.

It would be injustice to Captains Burnell and Churchward did I fail to bring to your notice the very many acts of kindness and attention shewn to the coolies by them, and of the prompt and cheerful assistance I have received at their hands on all occasions.

P. S.—Since the Vessel has dropped anchor at Gowhatty I have lost another man.

	Individual and Daily Quantity.			General Quantity.				Remarks.
	Srs.	Chks.	Chs.	Mds.	Srs.	Chks.	Chs.	
Rice, Ballam ...	0	10	0	28	5	0	0	18 days.
Dal, Arhur ...	0	3	0	11	28	12	0	
Oil, Mustard ...	0	0½	0	1	38	2	0	
Salt, Country ...	0	0½	0	0	39	1	0	
Atta ...	0	8	0	8	30	0	0	7 days.
Onions ...	0	0½	0	1	38	2	0	
Garlic ...	0	0	4drs.	0	39	1	0	
Chillies ...	0	0	0½	0	4	14½	0	
Turmeric ...	0	0	3	0	29	4¾	0	
Coriander Seeds ...	0	0	3	0	29	4¾	0	
Smoking Tobacco ..	0	0½	0	0	39	1	0	
Dry ditto ...	0	0	4drs.	0	39	1	0	
Choorn, best white ...	0	2	0	7	32	8	0	
Sugar ditto ..	0	0½	0	1	38	2	0	
Firewood, Split ...	1	0	0	62	20	0	0	
Potatoes ...	0	2	0	7	32	8	0	
Brandy ...	0	0	0	1 doz.				

MEMORANDUM of Deaths, December 1863.

Date.	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.	Shippers' Names.
4th December 1863	1	...	1	...	Chunder Baboo.
5th „ „	1 cook	1	...	...	Assam Company.
5th „ „	1	...	1	...	Bennertz and Company.
6th „ „	1	1	1	...	Ditto.
6th „ „	2	...	1	...	French and Company.
6th „ „	3	1	...	...	Assam Company.
7th „ „	1	...	...	1	Ditto.
7th „ „	1	..	...	...	Bennertz and Company.
6th „ „	1	1	...	...	Chunder Baboo.
7th „ „	2	...	1	...	French and Company.
7th „ „	1	...	1	...	Bennertz and Company.
7th „ „	...	1	1	...	Chunder Baboo.
8th „ „	...	2	..	1	Bennertz and Company.
8th „ „	...	..	..	...	Assam Company.
9th „ „	3	1	..	...	French and Company.
9th „ „	...	1	..	...	Assam Company.
9th „ „	..	1	..	..	Chunder Baboo.
10th „ „	1	1	..	..	Ditto.
10th „ „	...	1	..	...	Mr. French.
10th „ „	1	...	..	..	Assam Company.
11th „ „	1	..	..	..	Ditto.
12th „ „	1 cook	..	..	...	Ditto.

LIST

OF

Medicines, &c., for 100 Coolies.

Proceeding to Cachar or Assam.

Adhesive Plaster	...	..	1	Yard.	Mustard	... ...	½ lb.
Calomel	... ...		2	Drams.	Laudanum	... ...	2 Ounces.
Castor Oil	... ...		2	Quarts.	Quinine Solution	... ...	4 Ounces.
Chiretta	... ...		5	lbs.	Sweet Spirits Nitre	... ...	2 Ounces.
Cholera Pills	... ...		200.		Simple Ointment	.. ..	½ lb.
Compound Jalap Powder	... ...		1	Ounce.	Sulphur Ointment	... ..	1 lb.
Carbonate Ammonia	... ..		½	Ounce.	Sulphate Copper	... ..	½ Ounce.
Dysentery Pills	.. ..		200.		Sulphate Zinc	.. ..	½ Ounce.
Gregory's Powder	... ...		1	Ounce.	Tincture Kino	... ..	2 Ounces.
Linseed Meal	... .		2	lbs.	Turpentine	... .	4 Ounces.

Tartar Emetic Solution .. ... 4 Ounces.

Instruments.

1 Minim Measure.
1 Box Scales and Weights.
1 Set of Splints.
2 Six Yard Bandages.
4 Ounce Pewter Enema Syringe.
1 Pewter Urethra Syringe.
2 G. E. Catheters, Nos. 3 and 7.
1 Bleeding Lancet.
1 Scalpel.
1 Forceps.
1 Pair Scissors.
1 Sharp-pointed Probe.

Medical Comforts.

Sugar	5 lbs.	Arrowroot	5 lbs.
Sago	5 lbs.	Soojee	5 lbs.

Rum ... .. 2 Bottles.

By Order of F. N. Macnamara, Esq., M. D.,

Government Inspector of Laborers.

Certified that we have supplied the above to the Assam Company for 100 men proceeding to Assam.

Calcutta,
The 1st December 1863.

W. Gibbons,
Assistant Manager.

Examined.

Kooshtea,
The 3rd December 1863.

J. G. Grant,
Medical Inspector.

From A. C. CAMPBELL, ESQ., Personal Assistant to the Commissioner of Assam, to the Commissioner of Assam,—(No.—, dated the 4th December 1863.)

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit, for your consideration, the following remarks on the great mortality among a body of Bengalee Coolies who were brought up in the Flat *Hooghly*, which left Kooshtea on the morning of the 4th instant in tow of the India General Steam Navigation Company's Steamer *Agra*.

2. The coolies referred to were shipped by four Agents named as per margin, and were destined for Tea Factories in Upper Assam; the number of adults who came on board was 342, and according to the provisions of the Cooley Emigration Act, they should have been all in good health and fit to undertake the voyage, I beg, however, to state that on going amongst them shortly after they embarked, I perceived several individuals suffering under various ailments, and one or two of them died during the night the Steamer was detained at Kooshtea.

Assam Company.
Bennerts and Company.
French and Company.
Chunder Baboo.

3. On the second or third day after the commencement of our voyage, the sickness amongst the coolies increased rapidly, and several deaths occurred daily, the complaint most prevalent being a sort of Diarrhœa. On making enquiries from the men and the Chupprassees in charge of them, I was given to understand that for some days previous to being shipped they had been fed at the depôts in Calcutta on *chooja* and *goor*. I was also informed, that some batches of men who had arrived first at Kooshtea had been kept at the Ghaut or in its vicinity without shelter, until the Steamer was ready to start, and that during the interval, they were only allowed the kind of food abovementioned. I have but little doubt that this contributed greatly to engender the seeds of the disease, which subsequently broke out so fatally amongst them, and I may mention in particular, that a batch of 106 men shipped by one Chunder Chuckerbutty complained of having been kept at Kooshtea for three days without cover or cooked victuals.

4. The accommodation for the sick on board of the Flat was totally insufficient. There were no charpoys, bed-pans, or any other of the requisites usually provided even for paupers. A small portion of the deck, seven feet by eight, only being partitioned off with canvas and in this place, which was called an hospital, I found on my first visit to it, nine human beings huddled close to each other and actually perishing from want of care. The spectacle was indeed a most lamentable one, and on my noticing the subject shortly afterwards to the European Medical Officer in charge, he told me that the place I referred to was only intended for such of the men as were past recovery, and that as it was close to the ship side, the dead bodies could be thrown over without alarming the other coolies. This explanation, I beg to state, appeared most unsatisfactory, as some of the occupants of the apartment I have attempted to describe, seemed not unlikely to recover if they had been properly tended and removed from the filth and stench in which they were lying.

5. Of the 342 adults shipped, 256 were under the medical charge of a Mr. Doyle, and the remainder were placed under the care of a Native Doctor. It does not appear that they were very successful in their practice, as the latter lost twelve patients and the former thirty, making a total of forty-two deaths during a voyage of ten days. Mr. Doyle's selection seemed an unfortunate one, and at one time during the prevalence of much sickness he reported himself to the Commander as unable to perform his duties. The Native Doctor also was not of much use as the stock of medicines he possessed was found quite inadequate for the emergency.

6. I beg to quote in the margin a list of medicines allowed for 100 coolies for Cachar or Assam; it will be seen that Cholera and Dysentery pills are almost all the provision made for two diseases of a most virulent kind which are apt to break out amongst emigrants. I was told by the Native Doctor that his instructions were to use the above pills for all complaints of the bowels, but that he had ceased to do so as he found they were of no use. He attributed this to the probability of Native Compounders in the chemists, shops in which the pills were prepared having appropriated some of the components of the medicine which he thought they had re-placed with dough or something harmless substance. There is of course no means of ascertaining whether this surmise is correct or not, but, as it is generally admitted that even carefully prepared pills very easily lose their efficacy from age, exposure, and other causes, I thiuk that the present scale of medicines might be revised with advantange, and a large allowance made of drugs which could be used in the event of the pills being found ineffective.

Adhesive Plaster	...	1 yard
Calomel	...	2 drams.
Castor Oil	...	2 quarts.
Chiretta	...	5 lbs.
Cholera Pills	...	200
Compound Jalap Powder	...	1 oz.
Carbonate Ammonia	...	½ oz.
Dysentery's Pills	...	200
Gregory's Powder	...	1 oz.
Linseed Meal	...	2 lbs.
Mustard	...	½ lb.
Laudanum	...	2 oz.
Quinine Solution	...	4 oz.
Sweet Spirits of Nitre	...	2 oz.
Simple Ointment	...	1 lb.
Sulphate of Copper	...	½ oz.
" Zinc	...	½ oz.
Tincture Cardamum	...	2 oz.
Turpentine	...	4 oz.
Tartar Emetic	...	4 oz.

7. In bringing to your notice the above circumstances shewing the defects which exist in the present arrangements for sending up laborers to Assam, I would venture to express a hope that the subject may be enquired into, for if in one of the most healthiest months of the year, in the absence of any epidemic and without being overcrowded, the mortality amongst 340 coolies exceeds 11 per cent. during a voyage of ten days, the result of emigration to Assam during the sickly season must be something fearful to contemplate.

8. In any scheme for ameliorating the system which now obtains, I would respectfully suggest that there should be a stringent supervision of the manner in which the coolies are treated whilst with the Recruiting Agents and at the depôt, for it is apparent in the case of the men brought up by the *Hooghly* that from bad treatment, and perhaps from improper selections, a great number of them were in a diseased state before they were shipped, and a strong proof of this may be obtained from the fact that after the death of persons who came on board in a sickly condition very few fresh cases occurred, and the coolies were comparatively healthy when they reached Gowhatty.

9. I would also beg to suggest that laborers for Assam should always be sent up in charge of an European Medical Officer *of some respectability*, and that the service of a Native Doctor should be placed at his disposal. I would likewise recommend that not less than five charpoys and as many bed-pans should be provided for the use of sick of every hundred coolies, and that on the requisition of the Medical Officer as large a portion of the deck as could be spared should be screened of and used as an hospital.

10. I have been led to make the above recommendation from having seen during the past voyage of the *Agra*, the melancholy and brutalizing effect of the occurrence of sickness without proper preparation being made for it, and I am inclined to think that if a little foresight had been shewn on this head, there would not have been so many deaths. But if no other good purpose could have been served, the suffering of the sick might at least have been alleviated according to the recognized ideas of humanity.

Proposed Rules for the Management of Labor Depôts under Section 5 of Act III. of 1863.

No. 1. CONTRACTORS.—Every Contractor will be held responsible that no Recruiter is employed by him who is not duly licensed by the Superintendent, and will clearly understand that his own License may be withdrawn, or that he may be punished by a fine not exceeding Rupees 200, or in default of payment be imprisoned for a term not exceeding one month, in case of infraction of this Rule.

2. In cases where the Contractor does not reside on the premises of his depôt, he shall be bound to appoint some suitable person who shall always reside there, and conduct in his absence the arrangements of the depôt on his (Contractor's) responsibility, and such agent must be registered in the Office of the Superintendent.

3. The Contractor will furnish a monthly Return in a Form furnished by the Superintendent of all laborers who pass through his depôt.

4. The Contractor will give implicit obedience to the directions of the Medical Inspector on his visits to the depôt, to whom he will be responsible for the sanatory condition of the depôt, including the housing, clothing, and feeding of its inmates.

5. He will report to the Superintendent and Medical Inspector every morning before 12 o'clock, in the annexed Form, all arrivals of laborers of the previous day.

6. He will also report daily to the Medical Officer every case of sickness that has occurred during the preceding twenty-four hours, and on the appearance of a case of cholera in his depôt will immediately report the occurrence to the Medical Inspector.

7. He shall entertain a qualified Native Doctor who shall reside constantly on the spot, and shall provide separate Hospital accommodation and Medical Stores to the satisfaction of the Medical Inspector and Superintendent.

8. The Medical Inspector shall visit each depôt not less than once a week, and as much oftener if circumstances require. He will be careful that no laborer who is unfit to enter into an engagement shall remain in the depôt unless he be incapable of being moved on account of sickness, and that no person shall embark until he has been inspected by him.

9. On the recovery of a laborer from illness, the Medical Inspector shall certify to the Superintendent his fitness to proceed on his voyage or to return to his home as the case may be, whereupon the Superintendent will issue a Pass for embarkation, or otherwise deal with the case under the provisions of the Act.

10. As soon as a Native Doctor shall have been engaged by the Contractor to proceed in charge of a party of laborers, he shall present himself to the Medical Inspector without whose certified approval the appointment shall not be valid, and he shall attend at the depôt at such times as the Medical Inspector may point out to make himself acquainted with his charge.

STATEMENT shewing the number and description of laborers received into Depôt as required by Section XV. of Act III. of 1863.

Names.	Age.	Sex.	By whom received.	Where recruited.	Number of days on the journey.	By whom accompanied to the depôt.	State of health on arrival at depôt as certified to by the Medical Inspector.	Remarks.

Superintendent of Labor Transport. *Medical Inspector.* *Contractor.*

From CAPTAIN C. BURBANK, Officiating Superintendent of Labor Transport at Calcutta, to S. C. BAYLEY, Esq., Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal,—(No. 536, dated the 4th November 1863.)

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your office letter No. 1062T; dated the 7th ultimo, and, in compliance with the instructions contained therein, beg to forward, for submission to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the accompanying recommendations from the Committee appointed to report on the amount of space on Steamers and Flats, which should be allotted to each coolie proceeding to Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet under Act III. of 1863.

Report of Committee appointed to enquire on the amount of deck space on Steamers and Flats which should be allotted to each Coolie proceeding to Assam, Cachar and Sylhet.

THE Committee propose, for the consideration of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the following recommendations:—

1. That the deck space for each adult laborer proceeding to Assam, Cachar or Sylhet, be fixed at $6 \times 2 = 12$ superficial feet, and that two children under the age of ten years be allowed the space of an adult.

2. This measurement to be in force from 1st February to 31st October inclusive when the space might be lessened to 10 feet superficial.

3. To prevent overcrowding, the measurement of the lower deck and half of the upper deck should be computed as carrying space only; the other half of the upper deck to be reserved as a place for airing and exercise, and when the people could resort to for re-creation from the close and deadly atmosphere of the between decks.

C. BURBANK.
F. N. MACNAMARA, M.D.
J. B. BARRY.

Rules defining the position and duties of the Government Medical Inspector of Emigrants of Calcutta.

1. THE Medical Inspector of Emigrants at Calcutta is an Officer of Government, attached to the Office of the Protector of Emigrants, with a view to assist that Officer in carrying out, more effectually, the objects for which a Government Protectorate was established.

2. It will be one of the principal duties of the Medical Inspector to exercise a careful supervision over the state of several Emigration depôts; to see that the sanitory arrangements in each are good, and that the treatment, clothing, and diet of the coolies are, in a sanitory point of view, such as are likely to fit them for the voyage they may be about to make.

3. The Inspector will, therefore, be required to visit frequently the several Emigration depôts. Each depôt should be visited not less than once in ten days.

4. He should suggest to the officers in charge of a depôt, any alteration in arrangement or practice which may seem to him likely to benefit the coolie. When such alteration is of a petty nature, and when the depôt officers concur in advisability, no reference to Government need be made; but when such change is one of importance, or opposed to the wishes of the depôt officers as unnecessary or expensive, the proposed change should be reported for the orders of Government.

5. It should be the object of the Medical Inspector to assimilate the approved practices in one depôt to the other depôts so far as the conditions applicable severally to the different Colonies to which Emigration is carried on will render uniformity of practice expedient.

6. The Medical Inspector will be jointly responsible with the Protector of Emigrants for the eligibility, for Emigration purposes, of vessels which take Emigrants from this Port. He will be expected to accompany the Protector on his first inspection of a vessel which has tendered to receive Emigrants, as well as on the subsequent survey of the same vessel, when the internal fittings and arrangements for ventilation shall have been completed. His attention on this occasion should be specially directed to the state of the provisions and water laid in for the voyage.

7. It will form a very important part of the Medical Inspector's duty to superintend in person the embarkation of the Emigrants; to prevent overcrowding, and to see that every thing is done that can be done to lessen the likelihood of disease, and to increase the comfort of the Emigrants. The clothing of the coolies, and the arrangement for the hospital, and for ensuring cleanliness, should also be subjected to careful examination.

8. No Emigrant must be permitted to embark who is considered by the Medical Inspector to be physically unfit for the voyage. It will not be for the Inspector to decide upon the fitness or otherwise of the coolie for labor in the Colony to which he is bound. That is a question for the consideration solely of the Agent for such Colony. Provided the coolie desire to go, and is in a fit state to go, no hindrance to his going can be offered by any Government Officer.

9. Lastly, it will be the duty of the Medical Inspector to impress upon the Surgeon of the Emigrant Vessel the necessity for a very careful and detailed preparation of the Medical Journal of the voyage. These Medical Returns will eventually be made over for comparison and scrutiny to the Medical Inspector, and it may farily be anticipated that very excellent results will follow upon the careful examination of these Medical Returns.

10. The Medical Inspector will correspond with the Government of Bengal through the Protector of Emigrants.

FORT WILLIAM,
The 16th June 1862.

(*True Copy,*)

THOMAS JONES,
Registrar, Bengal Secretariat.

Statements of witnesses Examined before the Committee.

DR. SIMONS.

I HAVE received coolies shipped to Upper Assam under the new Act. They have been inferior as laborers, those absolutely unfit for labor being as many as from 15 to 20 per cent. throughout all seasons, in the rains, the rate being higher taken alone. They are landed at Dikkoomookh which although not a healthy place is superior to other landing places of the same sort. There is a large godown as a depôt, and boats are provided for the passage inland of those unable to march. A Mohurrir is resident at Dikkoomookh to superintend the feeding, lodging and clothing at the place. Thence they are forwarded, after detention not exceeding a day or two, to the principal station at Nazerah. The native doctor in whose charge they arrive, conducts them to Nazerah. The Mohurrir has no power of rejecting or returning coolies unfit to proceed further. The Magistrate occasionally has to come to Dikkoomookh to examine the people. An Assistant Superintendent of Police has usually been deputed for the purpose. We do not inform the Magistrate of the arrival or approach of coolies. Indeed it would take a day at least, in the rains more, to do so. We have imported a total number of about 750 coolies during the past year.

I have occasionally had remnants of medicine delivered to me on the arrival of bands of coolies; but usually in small quantities. I think the supply of medicines shipped in Calcutta insufficient.

The principal diseases from which bands have suffered have been chronic spleen, bowel complaint chiefly of chronic character, dropsies and varied debility, sequelæ of disease not contracted during the voyage. I have enquired of the people themselves and ascertained that they had been suffering before embarkation, in some cases long before. Some have remained in hospital for many months and done no work. Of the 750 coolies received, I suppose that 10 per cent. perhaps have been totally useless and incurable. Some of these have been sent to Calcutta at the cost of the Company. I consider the rates of sickness and inefficiency in the Assam Company to be less than those prevailing elsewhere, and it is generally so stated.

I am not aware whether Dikkoomookh has been officially constituted a landing place. I am not aware of any epidemic out-break of disease having occurred between Dikkoomookh and Nazerah, nor of any large mortality on this journey. The Assistant Superintendent of Police certainly in the majority of cases, conducts the landing of coolies. He comes on receipt of information from Calcutta of the departure of vessels, and is sometimes detained for days expecting the arrival.

Our coolies have never complained to me of bad feeding either in the Calcutta depôt or on the voyage, neither of the clothing, but I have seen the clothing and do not think the blankets provided sufficient in substance for the cold weather, or in size.

We have a good hospital at Nazerah and an establishment. Our depôt at Dikkoomookh can shelter 150 men, and we never require more at one time.

About 80 coolies were landed (I was absent at the time) at Dikkoomookh from the *Igra*. I had no opportunity of hearing particulars until I came on board the *Igra* on my way to Calcutta. The accommodation for coolies was as good as that provided under the system now in force. I saw Mr. Doyle on the return voyage, he was constantly drunk, that is ten days at least out of the twelve spent on board. A native doctor had charge of our coolies apart from Mr. Doyle.

I ascribe the general low physical character of our laborers to the bad selection of men in Calcutta. I think the accommodation sufficient as to space, and the food is sufficient, but variety would be advisable. Cooks I understand are selected from the coolies.

MAJOR BIYAR.

I consider that coolies shipped under the present system are much better fed and cared for than under the old; but I see no difference in the physique of the people. I have frequently in travelling about on duty seen a good deal of coolies on board steamers, and I have met with no other instances of disaster but this one on board the *Agra*. All have been judiciously and kindly treated, and there has been no sickness, the clothing has looked good to me, and I have heard no complaints of treatment in Calcutta depôts or on board. My duty did not lead me to make specific enquiry among the people in the *Agra*. The Magistrate and medical officer were there, and I did not interfere. I saw certainly half a dozen cases of foul ulcers on the legs.

There is accommodation at Dikkoomookh and Kokelamookh. At other landing places there is no necessity for special shelter as the factories are at hand. There is no depôt at Dhansirimookh, indeed there could be no permanent building, as the whole country is periodically inundated. Housing them on such a locality would be inadvisable, the present plan of transferring them at once to boats to complete the journey I think far better. I think the space provided on board the vessels sufficient. The planters do not complain of any falling off in the people lately as far as I know. I should say the contrary.

MR. SANDEMAN.

IN charge of the Cachar Company's plantation, receiving large number of coolies for three years past; sometimes they arrive by steamer, sometimes by country boat, those by steamer land at Chattuck and in the rains at Silchar. From Chattuck they come commonly overland, in the event of any difficulty, sickness, or disaffection, they are brought on in boats. Those travelling in country boats reach Silchar at all seasons. I am aware of no arrangement being adopted at Chattuck for their reception. They are landed on the shore, and take their chance as far as I know. In November last a batch of 60 coolies were despatched to me by steamer by Mr. Fryer. The advice of this I received about the time of the arrival of the people at Chattuck. I had no agent on this spot. I communicated with Mr. Smale, the Company's Agent at Silchar, requesting him to provide for the comfort of the people. I heard from him subsequently, that 28 out of the 64 had reached Sylhet and were lying in his partner's compound. How they reached Sylhet I cannot say. They eventually reached me in good condition. Of the rest I heard that three or four died at Chattuck and about thirty men ran away. I believe this to be a fair example of what ordinarily occurs on the landing of coolies at Chattuck, any thing better than this whould be exceptional. On reaching Silchar, the coolies land and are taken at once to the depôt. The depôt affords very good accommodation and has a good establishment. The Magistrate superintends the landing, and sick cases are sent to hospital. I am advised of their arrival, and I take delivery from the depôt by my own people. A lower depôt is in course of construction near Budderpore for the convenience of plantations in that neighbourhood. I should say that fully three-fourths of the coolies sent up in the cold weather go in country boats.

I have from the first, complained of the large proportion of incapables sent up—fully 10 per cent utterly useless. With these I do the best I can. I saw a few days ago, by invitation, a batch of coolies for the company in the depôt of Andrew and Hendry, of whom I considered at least 30 per cent were unfit for labor. I have received many aged people sent to me without a single relative, and have paid their return passage and sent them back after some days. I have noticed no change in the fitness for labor of the people sent up under the new system, no advantage over the old. Fully 5 per cent of our coolies go to hospital on arrival from diseases of long standing. I have heard no complaints of treatment in Calcutta and on board. The only evil in my mind is the want of fair selection at starting. I do not object to old people who have children to take care of them, they do well enough. I should say there at the present time are fully 11 per cent who are inefficient, that is unable to to do a fair day's work.

Their clothing is generally in tatters on arrival. Blankets small and poor, and I do not recollect any man having more than one. On one occasion, I begged Captain Stuart to enquire if more had been received in Calcutta, but he objected to do so, saying that it was not his duty. I have reported the scarcity of blankets to Messrs. Jardine, Skinner and Co. The people on this particular occasion were not sent by Captain Fryer.

CAPTAIN SHERER, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, CACHAR.

Lately Officiating Assistant Superintendent.

I have seen almost every batch of coolies that have arrived under the new Act. They have landed as Silchar close to my bungalow. Two batches have landed at Chattuck in Sylhet; coolies travelling by steamer land at Chattuck in two of the dry months of the year.

A large roomy barrack, capable of holding easily 500 people, is in charge of a Mohurrir attended by the native doctor of the Jail. The sick are removed to a temporary hospital near the Jail, superintended by the Civil Surgeon; provisions are supplied on landing by the Mohurrir, under supervision of Civil Officers in charge of station, coolies are never detained more than five days; planters mostly arrange for their speedy removal; otherwise, Government peons are deputed to conduct them to plantations. On landing, they are inspected by the Superintendent or Officer in charge, or his delegate.

From ½ to 7 per cent. have been unfit for labor in consequence of actual diseases. An average proportion of men not able-bodied from disease and other disabilities, would be not less than 15 per cent. In the last batch three men who landed in the first instance at Chattuck and then came on by boat, died before I could get them to the hospital. They had cholera among the party; where they got it I don't know, but these deaths were among the stricken. Clothing linen is sufficient in number of pieces, but many of the blankets are bad, and I have thought they must have been changed by the people themselves; they have been old looking and worn. The majority of the coolies have had good blankets; about 20 per cent. of bad.

I have had no complaints from the coolies of the quality of the provisions, but in nearly half the parties conducted by the natives, the coolies have complained of short issue of provisions on the passage. (That is, in country boats only.) I consider this is owing to the misconduct of the persons in charge. In one case, on the batch arriving, a churrundar represented that his stores were exhausted, and asked for an advance of food for that night. I went on board the boat, as I had information that there was food in the boats, and found maunds of dhal, *choorah*, rice, and excellent tobacco, besides condiments. I imprisoned the churrundar.

In another case, a native doctor who brought coolies for Tidd, Forbes and Co., Boglioghaut, concealed the most expensive medicines in his charge. He shewed small remnants to Mr. Tidd, who believed him, until one of the coolies betrayed the native doctor, and quantities of quinine and other medicines were found. The native doctor was convicted and punished.

Since these cases, no complaints have been made excepting of occasional short issue on the voyage, and the surplus store is always produced at the end of it; although there is no reason why they should not land and sell stores before they reach my district; indeed, I have heard that this is done near Bangah, that the stores are landed and either sold or taken up by the boats on their return to Calcutta. We did not see many of the men who arrived under the old system, but my impression is, that they are more highly thought of under the new system on the whole.

There has been a good deal of mortality, more in boats than in steamers. One boat passing a place where cholera was raging virulently, with less than 100 people on board, lost 30 by that disease. These cases of deaths were reported by the natives who may have represented desertions as deaths to save their remuneration, and my impression is that they did so.

I think that too much is in the hands of contractors whose interests lie in the shipping of numbers, and not of quality. The despatch from Calcutta should be conducted by some agent specially appointed and salaried, and whose remuneration, therefore should not bear any relation to the numbers shipped. If it were possible, I would prevent the transport by country boats, by confining the despatch to those periods of the year when steamers can reach Silchar.

If the rules, now promulgated, be faithfully observed, I do not think there is any need of change as to supplies of clothing and food. I do not think any positive cruelty are practised upon the people by those in charge except in reducing their diet.

I do not know of any instance where men have been returned by us to Calcutta, although we have the power to do so. The planters have wished disabled men to proceed when we have proposed their return, and for this and the presence of relatives in the party, we have always decided on suffering them to go to the plantations.

I have found men in such condition that I am sure they could not have been passed by a medical man. One man, stone blind for instance, nevertheless was passed as an engaged laborer. I have heard the coolies say that men are changed after being passed in Calcutta. I have often known the shipment of coolies conducted with great disregard of families. Husbands and wives, although evidently recruited together, have been despatched together, and on arrival find that they are allotted to different plantations. In one instance to plantations 40 miles apart.

Mr. Davidson.

I have been for 6 or 7 years in charge of Tea-Plantations in Cachar. Since the Act passed, I have received about 500 men. When men are required, I write through agents in Calcutta, and coolies are procured by recruiters, I consider the physique of the men improved since the Act passed—slightly so. I suppose in 100 men there may have been from 10 to 15 from various causes unfit for work of any sort. Not more than 50 per cent. can be called able-bodied men, the remainder are either constitutionally weak and capable only of light work or sick in hospital.

Complaints of short food on the voyage have been made, but they are not very common. I should say clothing is sufficient in quantity, but it is very filthy when they land. On landing, coolies have not more than one blanket per man, but the last I saw were in September.

I ascribe the physical unfitness of my men to bad selection in Calcutta. I have been under the impression that the Medical Officer in Calcutta was only responsible for the fitness of the men to undertake the voyage.

I believe the mortality on this voyage to have been exaggerated by the natives in charge by accounting for desertions as deaths. I am of opinion that the evils of the voyage in country boats would only be corrected by despatching fleets together with an European in charge. Of the plan of a central agency as proposed by the Committee, I think well, as calculated to correct existing abuses, and I am of opinion, that other planters would support the proposal.

I have known men landed on the plantation not entered on the rolls, and I believe they have been changed after the passing in Calcutta.

CAPTAIN BURBANK.

I am Superintendent of Labor Transport at Calcutta. My duties are these under the Act:—To register contractors and recruiters, to establish and license depôts in charge of contractors and under certain conditions after inspection by Dr. Macnamara and myself, the contractor receives from me licenses for recruiters and sends the latter out in quest of coolies. Coolies come to the depôt and the agents send me copies of the district registers. Within 24-hours of arrival, a report is made to me, and I personally visit the depôt and ascertain the treatment they have received on the road. When I receive information of a group being ready for despatch, I inform Dr. Macnamara, and request that he will inspect them. After this the contracts are explained by me and executed. My proceeding is taken the day following the medical inspection, and if any delay takes place before departure, another inspection is called for. I embark or despatch them with a list corresponding with the Medical Inspector's list. The names correspond but there is no proof that the persons are the same, but I cannot think how exchanges can take place, the demand is so great that depôts are cleared out by the despatches, and the contractors have no one to substitute for rejected people.

I visit the working depôts on an average once a week, and I have been generally satisfied with the manner in which the rules have been carried out In cases of neglect I have full power to suspend or withdraw the license and I exercise it. I have never heard a complaint of bad or short provisions in depôt but once. A fixed dietary for the coolies is in force.

The provisions for the voyage are despatched by myself or my assistant on board, or to the Railway Station. Sometimes provisions are laid in at Kooshtea, when a list of requirements is supplied from my office and returned to me certified.

I see the clothing also; one blanket is supplied in the hot and two in cold weather.

With regard to the duties of the Medical Inspector, I first considered that he should select laborers, but he afterwards represented that his instructions were to follow the course adopted by the Medical Inspector of Colonial Emigration. On this I took care to apprize employers of coolies that there was no selection made in the interest of the planters, and that if such were desired, it should be made by themselves. This was

understood and has been in some instances acted on. I do not consider that the clothing and food of the coolies in depôt are immediately in my charge. Dr. Macnamara ascertains the fitness of these, and I act on his opinion and report. Dr. Macnamara having inspected the coolies in depôt, does not attend their embarkation ; he does not consider it his duty, nor have I so regarded it.

On finding the blankets deteriorating, I have fixed standards of 2 lbs. 8 oz. and 1 lb. 12 oz. as the weight for first and second blankets. The quality of blankets has been a source of constant difficulty lately; the market has actually not afforded them in the necessary quantity. In one case a supply was intercepted coming by train to Calcutta for one Company by another agent.

I measure and license boats from Calcutta under rules laid down by the Government of Bengal,—and steamers also. I ascertain that the fittings are proper and the boats properly found for the reception of coolies. The measurement is made either by myself or my head assistant. One of the large hatches is ordered to be set apart as a hospital, and measured out, but no separation of the space is made. I ordinarily reckon about 60 superficial feet.

Medicines and hospital conveniences are not inspected by the Medical Inspector nor controlled by him in any way.

Privies are provided, and built up over the ship's side, and from the construction and proximity of these, I have not thought it necessary to make any other provision for the sick.

Native doctors sent in charge of coolies are examined and licensed by Dr. Macnamara.

I have had no complaints from river stations of the condition and supplies of vessels despatched, with the exception of one or two from Captain Stuart of Cachar.

The custom is for information to be sent to me from the contractors that the steamer will leave Kooshtea on a certain date, and in communication with Mr. Ryland, the people are sent up so as to arrive one day before sailing. If the steamer be detained, it is notified to me in time to prevent despatch of coolies from Calcutta; only one exception to this has occurred. I think delays may often take place in the case of country boats, I belive they do so.

I send intimation, after the departure of coolies, to Magistrates of Tea districts immediately after despatch, and particulars follow afterwards according to the Act, but I have nevertheless been informed by Magistrate that bands of coolies have arrived without any previous information respecting them, from delays in the post. I have also lately written to the Magistrate of Sylhet, requesting him to see the provisions made for coolies going to Cachar on passing through his territory.

There are at this moment nineteen depôts in existence, all lying within radius of ½ of a mile from Sealdah Station, and therefore at a long distance from my office—with the exception of the Assam Co.'s depôt, which is a longer distance. I think it quite impossible that any close supervision can be exercised over the conduct of persons in charge of these depôts by an officer having his office in Calcutta and other duties to attend to; such supervision, I mean as alone would deter native contractors from fraudulent and mischievous practices.

In the instance which has produced this enquiry, the usual arrangements were made by me at starting ; clothing was as usual excepting the blankets which, as on one or two

other occasions, were inferior, inevitably so, from the state of the market. No others were to be got, and I knew there were no prospects of early improvement if I detained the people. Two blankets were given to each person.

The Superintendent of Labor Transport at Kooshtea receives from me a list of provisions despatched by train, which are examined mostly by my assistant at Sealdah. Mr. Ryland, in the usual way, returned me the signed list of the *Agra*, certifying that all was found correct. Provisions are inspected by myself or my assistant at the Railway Station. In one instance only, Mr. French succeeded in getting off his stores unexamined, and I wrote to Mr. Ryland to make a special examination of them. I have never before had any complaints of provisions which are always reported as abundant and of good quality. I have found contractors very liberal in changing when change has been desired. Various opinions prevail in various districts as to the superiority of the various species of dal, but nothing definite has ever come of these in the nature of an objection.

My depôt Inspector is a Portuguese, on a salary of Rupees 82-8-0 per mensem. My head assistant has Rupees 115. Both of these pass provisions, the latter measures steamers and flats, the former country boats.

I can offer no explanation of blankets having been seen by Officers in Assam on board the *Agra* in the state and of the quality described in their report, except on the supposition that they were changed after my inspection in the depôt—an occurrence which I cannot regard as impossible.

No spare blankets have been put on board either for hospital or other uses.

I would point out that neither the Act nor the rules for my guidances require that I should inspect the clothing for the voyage: I have however, always done so.

I do not believe that coolies have ever been fed on *choorah* alone for days in the depôt. At all events, when questioned by me and asked for complaints no such statement has been made.

The *Hooghly* was inspected by me when the Act first came into operation, and measured. On the late voyage, the Superintendent at Kooshtea made all arrangements; no fixed rules have been laid down for hospital accommodation; suitable space is allotted by myself or Mr. Ryland, in each case. The *Hooghly* is only licensed by me for 300 people, but she measures on both decks for 600. Mr. Ryland is not in any way subordinate to me, nor bound by my decision. On a former occasion the *Hooghly* was licensed for about 550 by Mr. Ryland, and heavy mortality occurred. Upon this I addressed Mr. Ryland, suggesting a smaller number in future. All differences of measurement are now finally prevented by Government orders.

The attendants provided by me are native doctors, cooks and topasses. I have nothing to do with churrundars, sircars and others, placed in charge of parties of coolies,—with those, in fact who are charged with the issue of provisions and the general condition and comfort of the people.

MR. HOWARD.

In charge of a plantation of Sylhet and Cachar Tea Company, about six miles from the Station of Sylhet. I have received during the past year about 150 laborers.

Coolies are landed at Chattuck and Phenchoogunj during the cold weather months both for Cachar and Sylhet, but my own knowledge extends only to those landed for Sylhet

—about 100 in number this year. They proceed in boats; one party only have marched overland. There are no arrangements and no officer to superintend the people at Chattuck. I have known parties landed and sent forward without any provision of any sort, who arrived in Sylhet greatly exhausted for want of food. I cannot receive charge of people so situated until they have passed through the hands of the Magistrate, and he says, he can only receive them from Commanders of steamers, so that confusion is inevitable. About two-thirds of coolies destined for Sylhet, land at Chattuck. Of the party mentioned above, one died before reaching Sylhet and one immediately afterwards. There was no native doctor nor any other person in charge of them. I communicated with the Magistrate and the Commander of the steamer, Captain Sharp, but received no replies. There is a Thannah at Chattuck, but the Officer in charge has no control over the coolies.

The coolies in this particular instance were shipped by Mr. French. There was a native doctor on board, but he did not accompany the coolies to Sylhet.

The class of men shipped under the new Act is much superior to that of former times. Nearly all the men received by me were able-bodied men—certainly not more than 5 per cent were unfit for work. For the most part the clothing brought up was sufficient. I consider a central depôt, such as is recommended by the committee, would answer well in practice. I consider the Medical Inspector has the power to reject such men as are unfit for labor on the plantations. This is the general impression of the Inspector's duties among the Tea planters in my neighbourhood.

DR. MACNAMARA.

I am Medical Inspector under Act III appointed by the Government of Bengal.

I consider my duties to be, to take care that the depôts are properly found before licensed, and the conditions of the Act fulfilled as far as they come under my cognizance, that in the conservancy and maintenance of depôts, the coolies are properly housed, fed, clothed, attended in sickness. To prevent as far as possible any coolies from being despatched who are suffering from acute disease, or in any way unfitted for the journey. For this purpose, an inspecton is held of each individual about to embark, and those who are unfit for the journey are rejected, unless some special consideration prevent this—such as the non-contagious sickness of one member of a family, the extreme age of another member, &c. I take no cognizance whatever of the fitness or otherwise of any person for labor. I do not select laborers. I do not consider that either the Act or the instructions received by me from the Government of Bengal, impose such a duty on me. I am called upon to protect the coolie and not to act in behalf of private interests. I have received no written rules for my guidance as Medical Inspector of coolies or for the management of Labor depôts. A copy of proposed rules (those before the Committee) was sent to me for approval, I suggested an alteration to Mr. Eden to which he agreed, and made a pencil note on the copy which I left in his hands. I have received no amended rules, nor is my amendment in the copy now before the Committee. My view of my duties as Medical Superintendent is derived from several successive conversations with Mr. Eden, the general conclusion of which was that I was to consider myself in precisely the same position with regard to coolies migrating as the Inspector of Colonial Emigration.

The alteration I proposed was in para. 8 to define the Number of visits to be paid to depôts by the terms, "as often as may be required."

I am supposed to receive instructions from the Superintendent, and as he has never questioned my view of my duties, I have concluded it to be correct, and I have myself taken steps to inform employers that I did not select laborers for them.

I receive Rs. 150 per mensem, which rate I was informed at the outset was quite experimental.

I have laid down a minimum dietary for the coolies in depôt. Every man receives a blanket on admission unless he is already provided sufficiently. Provisions are purchased by contractors, and the food is frequently inspected by me, at unexpected hours. There is great liberality in this matter among the contractors, and I seldom or never hear complaints. A native doctor, approved by me, lives in each depôt, and medical stores are kept by him on the scale which I now hand in.

Act III Sec. XV.—This is not carried out, I discussed the point with Mr. Eden, who gave me to understand that rigid compliance was not expected. To carry this out would be absolutely impossible for any one officer. The depôts are distant and scattered and coolies arrive constantly in small detached parties at all hours. No certificate of the state of health of coolies on admission is furnished, my formal examination takes place on notice being received from the Superintendent, that a party is ready for departure. A list drawn up (not a descriptive roll) and my initials are appended to each name and the entire list signed. I separate on inspection every person whose case appears to call for particular enquiry—ascertain his recent history and symptoms, and decide upon these. A minute examination of every person, even if necessary, could not possibly be made, I am often called upon to examine as many as 500 people in the early morning in scattered situations. The native doctor is with me whose specific orders are to acquaint me with the fact if any one of those presented has been sick since his arrival in the depôt, but I feel no confidence in the manner in which this duty is performed. I have had occasion to suspend a native doctor for bringing before me, as healthy a man who had been sick, but I cannot act with sufficient regularity or promptness in punishing these men as they are re-placed with great difficulty when dismissed.

I have not represented to Government my inability to carry out the precise provisions of the Act. I have never, after the understanding at which I arrived, had a suspicion even that more was required of me than I have done.

I have nothing to do with the selection of vessels for cooly transport, nor with the accommodation on board, the provision made for the sick, the rations and clothing for the voyage—I see only the doctor who goes in charge, certify his competency, and regulate his medical stores for the trip on a fixed scale, which is that before the Committee. Medical stores are always supplied by Messrs. Scott, Thomson and Co., and Bathgate and Co., with the single exception of the Bengal Tea Co.'s who have my permission to employ their own druggist.

I would observe that the real allowance of Rum is 12 bottles per 100 men, not 2 as in printed scale. With regard to the scale of medical comforts, I think it would have been more complete if bed pans had been added, but I do not think they would be used. I would not recommend charpoys, nor any other means of separating the sick than that afforded by a moveable curtain which can be made to enclose such space as may be required at any time.

Although I do not consider it part of my defined duty to arrange for the voyage, the Superintendent of Transport is in constant communication with me on the subject and makes his arrangements under my opinion.

After my inspection is over, I have no further concern with the people, I do not know what interval ordinarily elapses between my inspection and their departure. It is understood that (accidents apart) they leave the same or the following day.

I think it very possible that people may be exchanged after my inspection, indeed, from what I have heard I think it takes place, I have myself known men who on being presented for inspection have not corresponded with the names on the list.

The scale of medicines provided for the voyage is framed with reference to the capacity of the native doctors in charge. Compounded medicines are given as far as can be done, that they may not be entrusted with stores of drugs with which they might do mischief. The class of men from which I am forced to select, I consider entirely unfit for responsible charges both by character and qualifications, I can only choose the best that present themselves.

I consider the clothing provided for the voyage sufficient. I frequently happen to see coolies prepared to start and they have been well clothed.

I have repeatedly enquired from native doctors as to the quality and sufficiency of medicines supplied for the voyage, and have never heard but one account, *viz.*, that they are good and abundant.

From the appearance presented by the coolies on arrival in Calcutta, I have often thought they had been badly treated on their journey down country, they have told me that they had not had proper food on occasions. It has been mentioned merely as an incident of the journey to account for their lean condition, not in any way as a complaint reflecting on any one in charge of them.

Ingress and egress of coolies in depôt is not free. I have always found the gates locked, and coolies cannot get out without permission, but I consider this only a necessary precaution to prevent their stealing the depôt clothing, I have no doubt that any man who desires to go, can go—I have never heard a complaint of a man detained against his will.

I consider the sanitary state of the depôts on the whole good—the mortality has not been large. Diaries are kept and sent to me, every case of cholera occurring is reported on first out-break.

I have read the correspondence connected with the voyage of the *Agra* which has given rise to the present enquiry. I cannot call to mind the particulars of the band of coolies despatched on that occasion. I do not believe them to have been more or less sickly than others embarking about the same time. There is no doubt that the physique of coolies has been gradually improving.

With regard to Dr. Throp's statement, I consider it to have been exaggerated. There are in most batches a few men suffering from large spleen and cutaneous disorders, secondary syphilis, &c., but the embarkation of such cases, in accordance with the view which I have taken of my duty, I have not felt called upon or even authorized to interfere with. Old and weakly people too have embarked with their families and relatives. Speaking generally I can safely say that, although it has not been my duty to select laborers, I have never allowed (with the exception of this latter class) any person to proceed, whose state of body was such that I should have pronounced him unfit to work in my own garden.

I may mention that with reference to this particular shipment, Mr. French who accompained the whole party to Kooshtea, tells me most positively, that he saw Dr. Grant at

that place carefully inspect every man, woman and child among them, before they went on board the steamer.

The statement of the native doctor in charge of the Assam Company's coolies as given in the correspondence, is at variance with that made to me by him after his return. He says, certainly, that medicine was useless, but in doing so he intends to illustrate the virulence and rapid course of the disease which killed his people, and not to allege any defect in the quantity or quality of the drugs supplied. He used other medicines, chlorodyne, &c., which were not included in his list, and which were also quite ineffectual.

I find it very difficult to come to any definite opinion as to the cause of mortality on this occasion. The evidence of the native doctor in charge of the Assam Company's coolies is before the committee in his diary. Mr. Doyle is reported to have been extremely negligent of his duties, so much so that the most ordinary arrangements and care were wanting on his part, and there can be no doubt, that if things really were as they are stated to have been on board, there was sufficient to add very greatly to the mortality of the voyage. I can however only pronounce upon this question on the same evidence as is before the committee. I had nothing to do with the accommodation or arrangements of the vessel, and as to the appointment of Mr. Doyle which did belong to my office, I can only say that he presented himself to me with a satisfactory letter; which is much greater evidence of fitness than I can commonly obtain in such cases. He had been in the subordinate Medical Department, and had held charge of the Jubbulpore Railway line.

Mr. Doyle ascribes 12 deaths to chronic dysentery, but he produces no diary, and I have therefore nothing to shew that this was true, it is the more doubtful, as the symptoms detailed by him in his letter are those of acute dysentery. If the treatment followed by Mr. Doyle was that laid down in his letter in the cases which he says were treated, he certainly was not open to the condemnation pronounced upon him by Major Agnew; but from the evidence which has been brought forward, I cannot consider his statement in this particular, more reliable than the other. His evidence, however, I thing clearly establishes the fact, that there was no lack of means at his disposal for proper treatment, whether he used them or not, and this coincides with the direct assurance given me by the native doctor that there was no scarcity of medicine at all.

With reference to para. 6 of Mr. Campbell's letter, I consider that the cholera and dysentery pills provided are, in connection with other means included in the list, the best provision that can be made and entrusted to the judgment of the native doctors, although in common with other remedial measures in these diseases, they are but too often ineffectual. There is certainly no foundation for the native doctor's statement (if it was ever made) that bad medicines are supplied. The names of the houses from which they are supplied, is I should think, sufficient evidence on this point. Similarly the instructions regarding the specific uses of the several medicines are written on the packages or bottles, and no orders were ever given by me that the "pills" should be given for all complaints of the bowels.

Chloride of lime has been pronounced necessary, I do not consider it at all necessary, nor even useful, if those on board did their duty in ensuring the most ordinary attention to cleanliness. Chloride of lime is commonly used by natives to cover and conceal dirt which they ought to remove.

I consider two native doctors quite sufficient to take charge of any number of coolies that can embark on board one vessel, and even if this were otherwise, it would be impossible to procure these men in larger numbers.

I would add to my remarks on the general condition of the depôts that the mortality from May to December 1863, has been ½ per cent.

I consider close and effective supervision such as alone would satisfy all requirements of the case to be quite impossible in depôts so numerous and scattered as those now in existence. I do not think that any rules could be devised which would improve the transport of coolies as long as this system exists.

I am of opinion that a central depôt organized in the manner proposed by the committee, is the only method of rectifing the several abuses now existing. The officers of the depôt should be salaried, paid by the planters responsible to them.

Mr. P. J. Doyle.

I went to Assam in charge of 3 batches of coolies aggregating 280 people, recruited by Mr French, Mr. Bennertz and Chunder Baboo, I received my license from Dr. Macnamara to whom I presented my certificate of qualification in the subordinate Medical Department, as a passed Apothecary, and my resignation of my office as Medical Officer on the Jubbulpore Railway line. I embarked at Kooshtea. The coolies were on board. I saw the coolies with Mr. Grant before departure. All seemed well, no complaints were made. I saw the clothing but did not take any particular notice of it. No complaints were made of the food before embarkation. The men on coming on board said, they had *choora* served out to them before leaving Calcutta, to serve until they could get rations cooked, and were anxious to get their dhal and rice, but nothing more. I saw thin looking men among the party, but none with marks of actual disease. It was not my duty to inspect people as to their fitness for embarkation. Churrandars accompanied the people. They received the provision from the hold. The stores were not in special charge of any one. The Chuprasses of the several parties went daily for the rations of their people. there were altogether 8 of these chuprassees, I saw only two cooks for the whole.

Various complaints were made to me on the way by coolies, of scarcity of provision. Churrandars also complained of failing stores, Bennertz and Co. and Chunder Baboo gave me money for the purchase of any extras that the coolies might wish for, but this was not intended to be spent in replacing any deficiency of ordinary rations. These were supposed to have been shipped in sufficient quantity, and they were so, for when we arrived at Debrooghur, it was found, that large quantities had been concealed, which the Churrandars endeavoured to make away with. Sickness broke out before we left Kooshtea. One case of choleraic diarrhœa proved fatal at the ghaut itself. I did not hear of the case until eight or ten hours after its occurrence. We never from this time lost the disease. It seemed to occur among the stout men fully as much as the feeble. I adopted the treatment laid down in my letter before the committee. There was no scarcity of the medicines provided by the Act. I consider that no cooly in my charge suffered from want of medicine, nor had I any reason to suppose, that the medicine supplied was inferior in quality. The men died from the severity of the disease.

The second day of the voyage, I found one man suffering from a chronic ulcer on the calf of one leg. This was the only case of ulcer on board. I placed the man in charge of Dr. Thorp at Gowhatty.

One case also occurred which had the appearance of secondary syphilis or rather the remains of secondary syphilis. He had been quite cured however, and was at the time strong and healthy. I landed him at Debrooghur in good condition.

One case (no more) of enlarged spleen was discovered by Dr. Thorp at Gowhatty. The man was active and well, and had made no complaint of sickness during th voyage.

Captain Burnell applied for a committee to enquire into the cause of the mortality when we reached Gowhatty, and a very searching enquiry was made. I do not know whether this is an usual practice. It was my intention to have applied for a committee, but Captain Burnell having done so, I did not consider it necessary.

The hospital accommodation consisted of a space about 8 feet by 6 feet, separated by a canvas screen. This was the only available space. The committee called for more space, which was obtained from the space allotted to the men who were landed at Gowhatty.

The men complained much of the cold. They said the blankets were bad and small. They were of very loose texture and varied much in size; each cooley had two. I do not consider that one medical officer is sufficient for so large a body of coolies. If there is any unusual sickness, he cannot do all that is required of him.

I did not daily inspect all the people on board. I was constantly among them, and I supposed they would tell me if they were ill. I kept record of all cases of sickness. No form of diary was supplied to me. Unfortunately as my record was kept on slips of paper, it was blown overboard in my absence.

In Mr. Campbell's letter, para. 5, it is stated, that I reported myself unfit for duty. This was in consequence of an attack of choleraic diarrhœa. On no other occasion have I reported myself unfit for duty.

As regards the charge of being found lying in an improper manner, I have merely to say that, as the mortality was very great below stairs, and in order to be as near as possible to the hospital, I moved my bedding and placed it among the people. I remained there only a portion of one day, a very short time. I had been taking sulphuric ether and cardamum to stop diarrhœa, and was very heavy when the passengers found me in the manner reported.

I can deny that I was ever intoxicated during the voyage.

With reference to Dr. Thorp's statement that the men from mere close packing, cannot reach the stern of the vessel speedily to ease themselves, it certainly is not the case. At night they may trip one another, and from debility I have seen men soil the decks, being unable to reach the stern, but never from simple crowding.

I believe that no report was made against me by the officers of the steamer and flat to the committee at Gowhatty. I believe a letter written by some of the passengers was put into their hands. The committee called upon me for a report respecting the mortality, but I was asked no questions concerning my own conduct: had I been allowed to defend myself, I believe Major Agnew's report would have been very different from what it is.

Mr. Doyle exhibits certificates of competency (as an Apothecary) and diligence from medical officers of the Carabineers, and certificate of qualification for promotion to the grade of Apothecary and Steward in the subordinate Medical Department.

MR. GEO. WILLIAMSON, JUNIOR.

I am connected with many plantations in Assam, some of which are my own.

I have been cognizant of the importation of several hundred coolies on account of these plantations since the passing of the new Act.

They have been landed chiefly at Bishnâth, Kokelamookh, and Debrooghur. Bishnâth is distant about 6 miles, Kokelamookh about 20 miles, and Debrooghur about 3 days journey from the plantations, for which those coolies were imported. At the two first named places there are not regular receiving depôts, but I presume there must be one at Debrooghur, it being a civil station.

Bishnâth is about 20 miles above the station of Tezpore, and being in the same district, the coolies landed there and in that neighbourhood, are examined and passed at Tezpore.

After passing Bishnâth, we come to the landing places in the Seebsaugor district, viz.—Dhansirimookh, Negri Sing, Kokelamookh and Dikkoomookh.

Heretofore it has been the custom to have the coolies landed at these places inspected by the Magistrate of Seebsaugor or a police officer deputed by the Magistrate.

The distance of these landing places from the station of Seebsaugor, and consequently from any competent officer, may be stated at 80, 60, 40 and 20 miles respectively.

This system of inspection is calculated to entail considerable inconvenience, delay and hardship to all parties, coolies included, from the fact that the Magistrate can never be certain of the probable time of the steamer's arrival, and must either have an officer waiting at the lowest landing place some time previous, or run the risk of detaining the steamer, which was the case with the *Agra*, the trip before last, the boat having had to wait several days at the Dhansirimookh, and obliged to proceed after all, before the arrival of the inspecting officer.

These landing places are merely ghauts on the banks or churrs of the Bromopootro, with no villages near them. The several companies and planters have godowns and sheds erected for the accommodation of their imported coolies, and the storing of produce or shipment.

The system which in my opinion would be found to answer best, would be to have the examinations and inspections made at the stations situated on the banks of the river, viz., at Gowalparah, for all landing places between that station and Gowhatty. At Gowhatty for all places between that and Tezpore, and at Tezpore for all between that and Debrooghur. With stations situated so far into the interior, the inconvenience of following any other method must be obvious.

I have been very much dissatisfied with the class of coolies sent up, many come up suffering from chronic disease, and many are physically unfit for the performance of ordinary coolie labor even when not suffering from disease. From these two causes combined, fully 40 per cent of the coolies lately imported may be considered a dead loss to the importers.

During the first 6 or 8 months after importation, the coolies are peculiarly liable to suffer from change of climate and habits. Those naturally or constitutionally healthy, speedily recover and remain well, but it is lamentable to witness the ravages made upon those constitutionally weak, predisposed to disease or actually suffering from it in some form or other.

Much closer supervision and stricter medical inspection are unquestionably necessary in Calcutta, not merely to weed out the positively diseased, but to reject such as are

obviously not of the laboring class or do not possess such constitutional stamina as will afford a guarantee of their being able to perform ordinary field labor. I agree with the committee in considering that the establishment of a central agency in Calcutta under these conditions, would accomplish the object aimed at, or at all events materially improve the existing order of things.

As a rule, I consider that the coolies are allowed an ample supply of food during the voyage. I have not latterly heard any complaints from them on this score. The blankets as at present supplied, or at the time I refer to, are rather small, but I consider one blanket if large enough, quite sufficient.

The general impression amongst the planters in Assam is that the medical inspection in Calcutta has been done carelessly, and that little or no benefit has resulted from the passing of the Act whilst its operation has been attended with certain inconveniences.

In importing coolies, the usual method is for the planter to write to his agents to select and ship for him. Even the most careful selection on the part of the agent would not entirely prevent the evils complained of, as the coolies are, in my opinion, liable to be changed; although I have no positive proof of this having been done, I have reason to believe the practice to be not infrequent.

Written addition to Mr. Williamson's oral evidence.

I am of opinion that it would be a decided improvement on the present system, if the carriers of coolies to Assam, that is the owners of steamers, were to provide medical attendance and medicine instead of the shippers having to do so; a medical officer might be attached to each steamer.

I think it would simplify matters and work more smoothly if the provisioning of the coolies was also to rest with the carriers under certain prescribed conditions.

G. WILLIAMSON, Jr.

Captain Burnell.

I am Commander of the steamer *Agra*, I have often carried coolies, I have made about seven or eight voyages during the last year with coolies. Some 400 men were carried on board my vessel before the new Act came into force. Under the measurement 350 men can be accommodated in one flat with two decks, upper and lower. About ⅓ of the men put on board are sickly, and not able-bodied. They are passed by the Magistrate and Doctor at Kooshtea before being put on board. Only one suit of clothes is allowed them. Women are allowed one *sarrie*, men a *sucrjaie*, *cummerband*, a cap and *dhootie*. I have seen them with two blankets. They are very bad, miserably narrow, generally too small, and so thin that one could see right through them. There is generally a chuprassee and a native doctor in charge of each batch. Cooks are specially sent on board. They come back with us, as also the native doctor. Sweepers are also sent, one to every ten men. The food given for the coolies is satisfactory and sufficient. I have heard of their living on *choora*, but I have no personal knowledge of it. I know of food being done away with by the chuprassees in charge of them. I attribute this to the want of proper controllers. In one instance, when we were near our journey's end, it was reported to me

by the chuprassees that they had run *short* of food for the men. My suspicions were excited, but still I thought it was time to run for it by making a speedy end to the voyage. When we arrived at Debrooghur, I requested my officer to have a sharp look out on the chuprassees, and reported the deficiency to the Magistrate, Mr. Hume. At about 8 o'clock, it was reported to me, that the serang and the coolie chuprassees had boats alongside, and were landing some cargo. I stopped the boats going away, placed my officer in charge of them, and went to the Magistrate, he came on board, held an investigation, and sentenced the serang to 18 months, and the chuprassee to two years' imprisonment. I should say that in this case upwards of 30 maunds of rice, dholl, onions, and potatoes would have been thus stolen; I think such occurrences are common. This was the only time I was led to notice it. The detention made me look about. Those men who were shipped on the 19th, and whose case forms the subject of the present enquiry, were quite an ordinary batch. They arrive at Kooshtea from Calcutta by the train at 1 P. M., and are shipped at 2 P. M. They are not regularly looked to, nor is their treatment in the depôt in Calcutta such as would promote health. Some of the coolies arrived two days before the whole batch, where they were lodged, I cannot say. Accommodation on board, consists of the usual space required by the Act, and wirtten in the Agreement. No arrangements made for hospital on board the flat at starting. The sick are allowed no servant to look after them. No comforts, no bedding, no covering, nor any of the necessary luxuries which a sick man requires.

The coolies were in a sickly state before starting, one man died on leaving, but immediately after, men began dying daily, in fact so much so, that I got startled on coming to Gowalpore. At Gowhatty, an enquiry was instituted by Mr. Agnew's orders. The Magistrate at Kooshtea makes arrangements for the men on board. License given every voyage. I believe the original measurement was made by Captain Burbank. A man by the name of Doyle was sent in charge on both occasions, he was always intoxicated. He was so bad one night, that I requested a doctor to look after him. In every voyage there is a coolie doctor engaged. The coolies are all passed by Doctor Macnamara in Calcutta. Food supplied on this trip was of ordinary quality.

The coolies were inspected at Kooshtea. Food was cooked twice a day, the men are not compelled to live on *chpora* and *goor*. They are themselves fond of it, while travelling they make a meal of it. They chiefly died at night and suffered more from cold. They generally waste away from diarrhœa and dysentery. It cannot be said that they died from cholera, for there were none of its premonitory symptoms, no cramps, they always ailed for some days before they died. The flats engaged for the coolies are always lashed alongside the steamer, if two flats, one on each side. In cases of cholera the men die suddenly, these wasted away. If it had been cholera, we would have lost some of our men, but none of them took ill—these coolies died of actual cold. The blankets were miserable—after the 11 men that died at Gowalpore, we did not lose a single one, one man died at Debrooghur, but this was caused from weakness. If attention were paid to the comfort of the men in their sickness, some would have been saved, at least so many would not die.

There would be no difficulty in screening off a portion of the deck for hospital purposes. The screen may be a sliding one to increase or decrease the space required, as the number of patients are diminished or increased, and the hospital should be provided with night pans, medicines and other necessaries. The galley for cooks on board is under shelter. When I had native doctors on board with the coolies, I used supervision over them, and saw them carry out my orders for the well-being and comfort of the coolies on board, but I was wanting in powers to enforce them with Europeans. If all Captains had such power, it would do some good. Mr. Doyle did not refuse to execute any order, but I saw it was useless to give him any, because he was in such a state of intoxication

throughout the time; besides there was so much mortality on board, that I did not think it right to interfere with the coolies. I am of opinion, that it would be highly advantageous if the coolies were placed in the charge of a competent person; an officer may be appointed from those on board to look after the food supplied to the coolies, and have a general supervision over the chuprassees without interfering with his other duties connected with the vessel, if paid proportionately, and it would be still more advantageous to have a competent medical officer always attached to every coolie-conveying vessel, with an adequate supply of medicines, hospital utensils and establishment for hospital purposes. I consider that if during the cold weather a temporary boarding 18 inches wide were run round the flat, it would be advantageous to the health of coolies, and prevent them from suffering excessive cold, this boarding could be removed in hot weather. A platform of bamboo would be decidedly objectionable, as it would form a receptacle for filth. The mortality throughout the year is nearly equal. Hot weather cholera carries away as great a number from its contagious nature as cold and absolute exhaustion do during winter; I am of opinion, that the deaths which have been so great this time, have been brought about only by cold.

Dr. Grant.

I am Medical Officer at Kooshtea, and am engaged to inspect the coolies. The inspection of the coolies that come up by train takes place three or four hours before the steamer starts, sometimes there is delay in reporting to me, the agents frequently leave me to find out whether any batch has arrived, and this delay gives me very little time to hold a proper inspection.

I receive no intimation of despatch. When coolies come, I expect to receive intimation from the agents. On receiving notice of arrival of coolies, I proceed to the bank of the river to inspect them. They sometimes arrive two days previous to starting (it is not frequently so) and they are then sent to the landing shed. Having inspected them on the bank, I leave them. I don't see them go on board. It is not my business to inspect the provisions. The Magistrate's duty it is, I believe. I find my position a very difficult one on the whole as regards passing the men. The general standard of the men made over to me is very low, and if I rejected one I should reject the greater portion or the whole. The difficulty of my position is still further increased by the fact of the men having been examined 24 hours previously by the Surgeon, Dr. Macnamara, in Calcutta, and holding his pass in my hand, I am placed in a most peculiar position to form an opposite opinion or reject any one, notwithstanding in cases of active disease, I have been obliged to interfere by keeping them back and sending them to hospital or returning them to Calcutta—I took the duty of inspection of medicines myself and reported to the Magistrate the insufficiency in that respect. I do not say that the quantity of medicines started with, are not sufficent, but there are some diseases which are not as common as dysentery, cold, &c., which require other medicines which are not supplied, and which in emergencies often retard recovery when not immediately obtainable, a native doctor is supplied with medicines, but sometimes native drugs are required, and they are not to be found. The stock of medicines should be complete in every respect. As a general rule those medicines given, are sufficient for a voyage, I have been employed since the rainy season. Bennertz and Co. and Gobindo Baboo have sheds at Kooshtea.

They are comfortable sheds. Coolies have no depôt. When the men are reported, to me sick, I send them at once to the charitable hospital. If a steamer is ready at the ghaut to start when the coolies arrive, they go at once on board, but when a steamer is detained two or three days which often happens, they have to look out for shelter for

themselves in such cases. I do not know what they do during the rainy season. When a delay occurs in the despatch of coolies, a more careful inspection takes place, but I cannot do this when the coolies have to start within an hour. The examination is then very imperfect and brief. Those cases which cannot escape notice are kept back, I cannot state with certainty, but I think that 3 or 4 were kept back last time, those ill were sent to Calcutta. Those that return to Calcutta were accompanied by agent of the contractors. There are some cases in which I cannot but pass men and women and children, who I know to be unfit for duty, this occurs in the case of a whole family proceeding up, when it would be hard to separate any one of its members, but this is not frequently.

My opinion is that greater and better supervision should be used in the selection of men at Calcutta, better agents employed and that a large central depôt ought to be formed for reception of coolies, where their comforts can be looked after, and provisions for clothing more adequate. I have already made some suggestions to Mr. Ryland as to the advantage of such a scheme, and he reported it to Government, but I have not heard of the result.

MR. W. T. SALMON.

I am Secretary to the I. G. S. N. Co. I wish to place before the committee some points connected with the transport and landing of coolies. We carry coolies to Assam, and in July, August, and September to Cachar also. We ship the people at Kooshtea, it is very rare for any detention of coolies to take place at Kooshtea in consequence of delay on the part of the steamers. Steamers often wait for coolies, but never for cargo after the coolies are ready. We give notice to contractors in Calcutta that the vessel is ready at Kooshtea, and they inform the Superintendent of Labor Transport. On two or three occasions a steamer has been detained for coolies, and on one occasion from some want of preparation on the part of the steamer the coolies were delayed; but I remember only this one instance. I think coolies should be at Kooshtea at least twenty-four hours before the advertised time of sailing. The steamers would gladly receive them for this period, and could then leave at the exact time advertised instead of having to wait, as at present, until the following morning to admit of medical inspection, &c. Our steamers and flats have all been measured, both in Calcutta and at Kooshtea. I consider that at present, judging from the appearance presented by the people on board, that the space allotted to them, is rather excessive than otherwise.

I cannot at a glance, see any objection to the issue of the provisions being placed in the hands of an officer. I am of opinion, that it would be very advantageous to the coolies that it should be so.

I think, that provided there be no cost entailed on the company, that a trustworthy medical officer employed by the ship and placed, as an officer under the commander of the steamer, would be very preferable to the present arrangement. The cost of this officer must of course be adjusted with shippers of coolies in some manner to be determined.

On the voyage we have had complaints of coolies running away from the vessel when going by the Sunderbunds. It has happened once or twice at Serajgunge. We let them go ashore to clean the vessel as often as we possibly can. There are strict orders on this point. Flats whether carried singly or in pairs are always lashed alongside the steamer. It is found that there is less danger from this plan. I think there would

be no difficulty in slacking one of the flats astern at night, the leeward flat might be so treated for the other, it would not be advantageous, some extra work would be entailed on the crew, but nothing more. By the rules in force we are not allowed to land coolies at any place, where there is not a Government officer to receive them. By an arrangement with the planters I am in the habit of landing them at mookhs adjacent or conveniently near to the gardens. I write before hand requesting, that by a certain day some officer may be prepared to receive people, sometimes he is there, sometimes not; on one occasion a delay of three days to the vessel took place, these mookhs are swampy places, by no means favorable spots for detention, and if we did not land them there, they would have a very long inland journey to some of the gardens, the difficulty might be removed by either of two courses:—1st. That an officer should be sent from the Seebsaugor district to Tezpore which is the nearest place to the mookhs, this would involve an absence from his district of 20 days in each month. The 2nd plan is that the people should be examined and finally passed at Tezpore, and that there we should drop them without waiting for any further Government inspection. I have never known an instance of any planter being wanting in arrangement for meeting his people at the several spots. Had any such defect existed, I should certainly have heard of it, as a cause of detention of steamers, and I do not think any inconvenience need be apprehended on this head from the carrying out of the second proposal.

I think the Kooshtea route preferable to that by the Soonderbunds, it is healthier, and eight days shorter.

EXAMINATION OF MR. RYLAND.

1. You are Superintendent of Labor Transport at Kooshtea?

2. Be good enough to state briefly what you consider to be your duties with respect to parties of coolies arriving at Kooshtea?

3. What arrangements are made for housing, clothing, and feeding the coolies in case of detention at your station?

4. Is such detention common, and what has been the extreme detention to which in your experience a band of coolies has been subjected?

5. Do you inspect the food and clothing received with coolies by rail from Calcutta?

6. What is your opinion generally of the physical condition of the people reaching your station from Calcutta?

7. In case of manifest unfitness to continue the voyage, do you consider yourself authorized to direct the return of a coolie to Calcutta, and if so, are you in the habit of exercising such a power?

8. What arrangements are made for embarking the coolies? Do you personally superintend the embarkation?

9. Be good enough to state the manner in which your inspection of each coolie or batch of coolies is made?

10. Have you received any rules for your guidance as Superintendent of Labor Transport, if so, be good enough to forward a copy to the committee?

11. In case of your absence on duty from Kooshtea, what arrangments are made for the performance of your duties?

11. With reference to the case of the *Agra* and *Hooghly* which has given rise to the present enquiry, be good enough to state whether there was, in your recollection, any thing unusual in the appearance of the people, or the management of the embarkation of the batch?

12. For what period were they detained at Kooshtea, and did you hear any complaints from the people of the treatment they had received in the Calcutta depôts?

13. To what cause do you ascribe the sudden out-break of fatal illness after embarkation?

14. Are the statements made by Mr. Campbell in para 3 of his report which has been furnished to you, with reference to the people despatched by Chunder Chuckerbutty correct or not? If so, please to explain the circumstances under which the detention took place?

15. Be good enough to state in writing any suggestions for improvement at Kooshtea which you consider would be to the advantage of the coolies, and tend to prevent such evils as those complained of in the correspondence you have received?

ANSWERS.

I am Superintendent of Labor Transport at Kooshtea.

1. I consider my duties to be, to examine and compare the lists of coolies shipped with the contracts or passes signed by the Superintendent in Calcutta, first, for the purpose of ascertaining the actual number on which the capitation fee is payable, and in the next place to satisfy myself as far as possible, that the laborers shipped, are those that have been passed, and that there is no subsequent cause for unwillingness, or complaint, either owing to deception or ill-treatment; to see that the laborers are properly provisioned, according to the rules, and accommodated with sufficient space and other requirements, and lastly that none embark whom the Medical Inspector considers to be in a bad state of health. When the coolies are entirely passed and registered here, of which there have been two or three instances, the forms of attesting the contracts and granting passes, after proper medical inspection, are regularly gone through as required by Act III of 1863.

2. The laborers are brought up from Calcutta by Rail, and on arrival, are generally at once put on board the steamers or flats, or on country boats, if proceeding by the latter to Cachar and Sylhet. Two of the largest shippers, however, Mr. Bennertz and Baboo Govind Chunder Dutt, have their agents on the spot, and have erected sheds or minor depôts for their coolies. Mr. French also has engaged huts to receive them, and other contractors have lately adopted the same plan, but the arrangements for keeping laborers on shore, are necessarily very temporary and imperfect, and do not admit of regular supervision.

3. There is rarely a detention of more than a day when the laborers are despatched by boats in single batches, but the steamers are frequently delayed two days or more, owing to the non-arrival of the full complement in time. In the case of the *Industry* there was a most inconvenient delay of four days from the 14th to the 18th instant. Only one instance has taken place in which country boats were detained belonging to Govind Chunder Dutt, for six days, from the 18th to the 26th June last, owing to

a portion of the coolies intended to start, being brought away from Calcutta before the whole number were ready, in consequence of cholera breaking out in the depôt.

4. Not further than to ascertain that the provisions have arrived and have been shipped, though I have occasionally re-examined them.

5. At times there is a large proportion of weak and feeble looking persons, but some of the batches from about Arrah, Chupra and Hazarebaugh are remarkably good. Of late I think there has been a considerable improvement, and some of the contractors seem to display more care in selection than others.

This is a matter in which I think the planters themselves should be the best judges, and adopt their own precautions to secure good laborers.

6. I have in some instances exercised this power, under the latter part of section 16 of the Act, though it is not directly applicable to laborers who have once left the depôt and are in transit from a depôt, where they have been already passed to the place of embarkation, which is not provided for in the Act, but for the last four months, since a charitable hospital has been built, arrangements have been made here to receive the sick, who are too ill to be removed, under the care of the native doctor. This arrangement however, is one which can only be carried out to a limited extent for a time, as it interferes with the real objects of the institution.

7. I have invariably gone on board the steamers and flats myself, and have seen the coolies embarked. There are no regular arrangements for embarkation, for, as I have before said, the coolies are often sent on board previous to being inspected, and are there examined.

8. The names are called over from the contracts in my presence, and marked off on the list, and in case of any doubt or disagreement, the passes are referred to. Each coolie then undergoes observation and is more particularly examined by the Medical Inspector, but frequently the inspection is very hurried, owing to the arrival of one or more batches when the vessels are ready to start, and it is thought preferable to make a cursory inspection, to incur the evils of detaining a vessel for more careful examination. In fact I have not thought it necessary or expedient to cause such detention after being satisfied that the laborers have been duly passed. I have considered it my duty, and if asked, I should say that of the Medical Inspector also, to confine our attention to any changes occurring or illness supervening since the coolies left the depôt in Calcutta.

9. I have received no special rules or instructions with regard to my appointment, and the only rules forwarded to me are those relating to the management of depôts issued with Government letter No. 1632 of the 18th April, 1863, which have not been brought into use here. Information on other necessary points has been obtained by communication with the Superintendent of Labor Transport, Calcutta.

10. It has never so happened that I have been absent when required, but in the case supposed, the Medical Inspector might be called upon to act on an emergency.

11. There was nothing unusual in the embarkation of the coolies on board the *Hooghly*, but as far as I can remember, I think it was remarked that they were rather below the average in physical appearance.

12. I cannot now ascertain the exact time that the several batches were detained, but I do not think it could have exceeded one or at the utmost two days. The vessel was advertized to start I think on the 3rd of December, and I find that three of the batches were examined on that day. The fourth batch, (Mr. Bennertz's) among

whom there appears to have been an equal amount of sickness, arrived and were put on board on the 4th, the very day on which the vessel sailed. No complaint certainly was made of any ill-treatment.

13. It is impossible for me as a non-medical man to assign any particular cause for the out-break of sickness when so many causes might have combined to occasion it, but I may observe that so far from being the healthiest (as Mr. Campbell remarks) it was perhaps the most unhealthy period of the year. The epidemic in many parts of this district was almost at its height, and there was a great deal of sickness and mortality among the natives generally.

I understand that soon after the vessel left Kooshtea, damp and foggy weather was experienced, which, added to the various discomforts on board which it is impossible wholly to provide against, and especially, at first starting, might have created disease, to which some irregularity in food inseparable from a hurried journey, might have predisposed the coolies, and particularly, those from the jungly districts, who are peculiarly susceptible also of any alarming influences.

The inefficiency of the medical officer on whom would depend the regulating of the diet and treatment on board, must also have been a promoting cause quite sufficient to account for the extent of the mortality which does not seem to have been confined to one batch more than another.

14. I consider the statements made in the 3rd para. of the letter referred to, to be very much exaggerated.

Of the food in the Calcutta depôts, I am unable to say more than that no complaint of the kind was made to me, and here, though not brought to my notice at the time and partly unavoidable under the present state of things, I beleive that some of the coolies who arrived late by the evening train, had no cooked meal the whole day, and no proper shelter at night, but I do not think it possible, or likely that they were subjected to such treatment for any length of time, as I generally saw them cook their meals on shore whilst detained and at night those who had no other place were received on board the flat.

As before said, I do not think the detention in any case exceeded two days.

15. I would suggest as the first thing necessary, the erection of a suitable place of accommodation for laborers on arrival and previous to shipment, to allow of careful examination, and to prevent their being hastily sent on board before being inspected, and where all who are sick or detained from other causes may be properly looked after.

I have already made a representation on the subject to the Superintendent in Calcutta.

I would recommend one general depôt for this purpose, to admit of proper supervision and control. An application has been made to me, which has been forwarded to Captain Burbank, by Messrs. Were and Griffiths, who are about to establish an agency business at Kooshtea. They propose to build a large depôt and to let it out in quarters to the several contractors, undertaking also to become their agents, and to supply all necessary articles of food and clothing. Such an arrangement would be far preferable, and probably also would be much more quickly carried out than if left to the contractors themselves, or undertaken by Government, and under proper rules and restrictions would provide all that is wanted in this respect. When completed, I think it would in time become the main depôt, as the contractors would probably find it to their advantage in cheapness to bring

their coolies direct to Kooshtea instead of retaining them in Calcutta, and in point of healthiness, the laborers would certainly be in a better locality. The piece of ground taken by Messrs. Were and Griffiths is well chosen, being situated near the confluence of the Kaligunga and Gorai, close to the new landing station of the Railway, and in a far better position than the present temporary buildings, a plan showing the proposed site has been furnished by me to Dr. Payne of the Committee.

Next as regards accommodation on board the vessels.

On every steamer or flat licensed to convey laborers there should be a competent person approved by Government and appointed and paid by the owners of the vessel to take medical charge of the coolies and to be responsible for their entire treatment on board. The vessel should also be provided with medicines and all medical stores and necessaries, as well as a hospital ward and attendants. All the charges on this head should be included in the passage money.

There should also be better protection than the present canvas-purdahs afford, which do not close quite down to the deck in case of rain or blowing weather. Moveable Jhamps or planking might be used, reaching 2½ or 3 feet high, and the canvas-purdahs above.

In country boats there is more freedom, and the coolies have the opportunity of landing and cooking on shore. There is consequently, I believe, much less sickness and discomfort.

Still I would propose that there should be a fixed staff consisting of a properly qualified doctor responsible to the Superintendent and Medical Inspector of the place whence the embarkation is made, besides a person in charge of the stores and a certain number of peons in proportion to the number of laborers to prevent misconduct, which I believe frequently takes place by the men getting on shore.

There should also be one boat set apart and attendants for the sick.

Lastly, I would beg to point out the very imperfect provisions of the Act.

Section 2 requires that the local limits of each superintendency should be defined, but so far as I am aware, no such limits have been specifically laid down, and it appears to me that they should be fixed only in so far as relates to the depôts established by order and under the immediate control of each Superintendent, in all other respects, the authority seems to be general. As for instance, in granting licenses to contractors, the form specifies that thay are to act within the local limits of the Superintendent, but under Section 4 there is nothing to prevent them from engaging laborers in any part of India, and it is obviously not intended to require them to take out a license from each Superintendent before whom their laborers may be brought, which was never contemplated.

As at present framed also, contractors are responsible to, and bound to obey the directions only of the Superintendent, by whom they are licensed, vide Sections 5 & 6. This ought to be rectified, and the requisitions of every Superintendent with whom a contractor may have occasion to transact business, and made on just grounds, should be obeyed.

I would point also to the very vague and inoperative wording of Section 42, which prescribes certain penalties without describing the offences or the mode in which conviction is to be obtained, while no punishment has been prescribed for disobedience or omitting to do what is lawfully required by a Superintendent or Magistrate which should be distinctly provided for.

Before concluding, I must mention the necessity for some establishment to conduct the duties which are daily increasing, and which I have hitherto carried on, at much personal inconvenience and trouble, without any assistance, but as I am about to be relieved, a proposition on this subject can be better made by my successor.

W. H. RYLAND,

KOOSHTEA, *Superintendent.*

29th February 1864.

No. 1076.

FROM

THE JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

TO

H. A. COCKERELL, ESQ.,

President of the Committee for enquiring into the state of Coolie Emigration to Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet.

REVENUE. *Dated* FORT WILLIAM, *the 16th March* 1864.

SIR,

IN continuation of letter from this office No. 854, dated the 1st instant, I am directed to forward copy of a letter No. 21, dated 9th idem, with enclosures, from the Commissioner of Dacca, and to request that Captain Stewart's Report on the working of Act III of 1863 in Cachar may receive the consideration of the Committee when submitting their Report to Government.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient Servant,
S. C. BAYLEY,
Junior Secretary to Government of Bengal.

No. 21.

FROM

C. T. BUCKLAND ESQ.,

Commissioner of Dacca,

TO

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

Fort William

DATED DACCA, *the 9th March* 1864.

SIR,

With reference to your No. 853, dated 1st instant, I have the honor to state for the information of the Lieutenant Governor, that orders have been sent to the Collector of

Sylhet and Superintendent of Cachar calling for an immediate report which will be submitted on its receipt.

2. In the mean time, as it appears that a Committee on the coolie question is sitting, I beg to forward copy of a letter No. 12, dated 5th ultimo and of its enclosures, from the Superintendent of Cachar, being his report on the working of Act III of 1863 and also of my letter calling for further information, in case the Government should think fit to communicate those documents to the Committee.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) C. T. BUCKLAND,
Commissioner.

No. 12.

FROM

CAPTAIN R. STEWART,

Superintendent of Cachar,

TO

THE COMMISSIONER OF CIRCUIT,

DACCA DIVISION,

DACCA,

Dated Camp Kullain, the 5th February 1864.

SIR,

I do myself the honor to report upon the working of Act III of 1863 in Cachar since its introduction in May last to the end of the year.

2. My absence on leave has prevented an earlier submission of this report.

3. During the period above mentioned 6197 coolies have been started from Calcutta for Cachar, of these 1005 only were women, being but 16 per cent instead of 25 as laid down in section 36 of the Act.

4. Of the above 6197 coolies, two hundred and four died on the way up the river, being about 3¼ per cent on the whole, and one committed suicide.

5. 235 or 3¾ per cent absconded on the way up, and 5735 or 92⅝ per cent actually reached Cachar.

6. Of those that reached Cachar, 95 or nearly 1½ per cent arrived sick, and were treated in hospital before being sent to their employers.

7. The per centage of deaths is very favorable indeed when compared with what was the state of things before the introduction of the act, but still there is room for improvement, and a mortality of 3¼ per cent during a voyage of 3 weeks or a month must be allowed to be enormous.

8. The greatest mortality that occurred in any one batch, was that of 14 in one batch of 47 sent up to the Cachar and Assam Company, this is 29 per cent; in 7 batches it exceeded 10 per cent, in 33 batches it was below 10 per cent, and in 51 batches there were no deaths at all.

9. The coolies sent up since the act was introduced, are in my opinion more robust and healthy than those previously sent up, and this in itself is a great advantage. But I am sorry to say that by far the greater number that have come under my obser-

vation are persons who have not been accustomed to hard labor or to labor of the kind they come up for, and that, it would appear, that crimping is as much, if not more practiced, notwithstaning the act than it was before, the demand for coolies being greater. I have no hesitation in saying that every coolie when he comes up here is under the impression that he is to earn 10 to 12 Rs. a month by easy work, whereas he most probably finds that his weakness or want of skill enables him to earn no more than 2 or 3.

I do not think the average earnings of imported labor is above Rs. 3 a month, and hence great discontent arises and number abscond to the great loss of the planters.*

10. The Superintendent of Labor Transport has informed me that he explains to all the coolies who are sent up, the nature of their agreements, that he does so personally to them in batches of 8 or 10. I am afraid they do not understand him, they are chiefly rude villagers and speak different dialects of both Hindoostanee and Bengallee. But even if he could speak to them in their own village patois it would be impossible for him to make them comprehend the deed they put their names to. They cannot be made to have any idea of the daily work demanded of them before they are entitled to their daily wages, and it is by attributing exceeding lightness to this daily task and persuading the men that the weakest and sickliest of them will be able to do two or three tasks in a day and earn 8 to 12 Rupees, that the contractors induce men to come up. Many of those sent up when first required to dig, are quite indignant.

"We didn't come up here to do that, we were told that we had nothing to do but pick up tea leaves, and that we would get 2 annas for every 8 seers we picked."

This has been told me several times by different men of different batches, and it is true that the men had never performed hard manual labor before, with all this firmly impressed upon their minds by the contractors, they appear at the Calcutta depôt, and schedule A of the accompanying agreement among other parts of it has to be explained to them. They were to pick 8 seers of leaf, they were told that before, and it confirms them in the truth of what the contractors said. But they do not know that they have only to pluck the youngest and the finest leaf, and that only in the fullest gardens can 8 seers be plucked in a long day, and what can they know, or what can be explained to them about picking prepared tea, or Pekoe tea? How can they tell what sort of work clearing and cutting jungle is, until they have seen the jungle, or what hœing is, until they have seen the soil. These operations in different places vary most enormously, and the tasks given in the Schedule are, I should say, an able-bodied man's days work in the most favorable locality. They are therefore at the mercy of the planter when they come up to Cachar, and he either insists upon the full task or reduces it, as it suits his sense of justice. I do not think that it is fair that a blind bargain should in this way be made.

11. There is no provision in the act or in the agreement for sick men, I think that a clause might be introduced by which the employer binds himself to support the men he imports, while they are sick, making them a certain allowance for this purpose, and also that when through sickness or otherwise they become incapacitated for labor within the term of their agreement, that they be supplied with a certain sum of money or a free passage to their homes: at present, as soon as a man is no longer of use to the planter, most probably from long sickness or disease, he receives his discharge, is generally too happy to take it, but has no money to take him home, and dies by the road side.

* Note—The abscondment on the way up too are attributable to what the emigrants hear of the real amount of wages they will receive from the people they meet.

A great many cases of this kind have taken place.

12. I am of opinion also that there should be a clause for the supply of a free passage home at the expiry of their term of service. It is very difficult for men to return from this westward, and individually they can hardly manage to do so, even if they have money, and money make but very little.

13. The price of local labor in Cachar is now four annas per diem, and in some gardens I believe as much as Rupees 10 per mensem, that the imported labor should be so low, is in itself a cause of dissatisfaction to the imported, the difference is doubtless owing in a measure to the Physique of the men, but much more so to the schedule in the agreement, were this done away with, I would recommend the appointment of a protector of emigrants in Cachar, who would not only do the present work assigned to the Magistrate by the act, but would, after importation, settle the tasks in concert with the planter and the coolies.

14. Great inconvenience arises from the coolies being landed at Chuttack and below the stations in Cachar to which they are assigned, from whence they have to make long land journeys, the contractor should be compelled when it is necessary to land at Chuttack or elsewhere in the steamers to make arrangements for the coolies being immediately forwarded by boats, through agents in Cachar or Sylhet.

15. Several batches have arrived together for different gardens, in these, in more than one occasion, man and wife were separated and sent to different gardens, in others mothers and children, and in one case, brother and sister. There may have been 20 cases in all of this kind. Greater care should be taken to send entire families in one batch.

16. In conclusion I am sorry to be obliged to say that I do not consider the emigration for the causes I have above given to be yet on a proper footing, and I trust that the Government may be moved to make further enquiry and amend the act.

In my opinion the crimping of the contractors and the blind bargain made by the coolies is at the root of the evil, and the more the amendment affects these, the more will the system be ameliorated.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) R. STEWART.

Superintendent.

P. S.—As an illustration of the crimping put in force, I may here mention a story told me by one of the men sent up for the garden of Kotchila, I think it was. He presented himself before me very shortly after his arrival, and asked me to look over a bundle of documents he handed over to me. These were testimonials from many gentlemen, and some messes whom he had served as khansamah on high wages. I asked him what induced him to become a coolie on four Rupees a month, and this was his tale "my home is at Barrackpore, and I have for the last 20 years served sahibs as Khitmutgar and khansamah, when they leave Barrackpore for the North Western Provinces I accompany them, but leave my wife and children behind every two years. I was in the habit of returning to my family, sending them remittances in the mean while. I last went with a gentleman to Lucknow, and I staid there two years, when I left the service to return home, I found no one at my home, it was deserted for two months. I sought traces of my wife and children, and at last found that they had

gone to a coolie contractor, I went to the contractors and inquired about them, after some delay he told me that they had come to him, and he had engaged them as coolies to serve in Cachar, and that they had gone up there some months ago. I was in despair, and asked how I was to get them back, and was told it was impossible, at last the baboo said "you had better go to them yourself." How can I do that said I. "oh! I will give you a free passage, and you can go and join them in Cachar." I signed the agreement and here I am." Whether this man's wife and children ever actually came to Cachar or not, or whether he has found them, if they did, I do not know.

(Signed) R. STEWART,
Superintendent.

(True copy)
(Signed) W. THOMSON,
Head Clerk.

No. 262.

FROM,

C. F. BUCKLAND, Esq.,
Commissioner of Dacca,

To.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF CACHAR,

Dated Dacca, the 24th February 1864.

SIR,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your No. 12, dated 5th instant, containing your very interesting report on the working of Act III. of 1863, in Cachar.

2nd.—Before submitting it to Government I shall be obliged if you will supply me with information as to the arrangements made and the expense incurred for landing and housing coolies on their arrival in Cachar, and by whom the duty of inspecting them has been performed.

3rd.—With reference to your 15th para, it is very desirable that you should ascertain if in those cases where man and wife, or mothers and children, have been separated, measures have been taken for bringing them together under one employer.

4th.—I trust also that you will endeavour to obtain further information as to the history of the Khansamah mentioned in the Postscript of your letter, such a case demands full enquiry, as the alleged disappearance of the man's wife and children gives rise to very grave suspicion.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) C. T. BUCKLAND,
Commissioner.

(True Copy)
(Signed) W. THOMSON,
Head Clerk.

(True Copy)
THOMAS JONES,
Registrar, Bengal Secretariat.

No. 1182.

OFFICE MEMO.

Revenue.

Dated Fort William, the 23rd. March 1864.

The accompanying copy of agreement received from the Commissioner of Dacca is forwarded to the President of the Committee for enquiring into the state of Coolie Emigration to Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, with reference to the letter from this office No. 1076, dated the 16th. instant.

S. C. BAYLEY,

Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

No. 589

FROM

THE JUNIOR SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

To

H. A. COCKERELL, ESQ.,

President of the Committee for enquiring into the General Subject of Coolie Emigration to Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet.

Revenue. *Dated Fort William, the 10th February* 1864.

SIR,

I am directed to forward herewith a copy of a letter dated 8th instant, from the Secretary to the Bengal Tea Company "Limited" regarding the difficulty experienced by the company in securing the approval by the Medical Inspector of Laborers of the native doctors engaged by them to accompany emigrants, and to request that the committee of which you are the president will be good enough to make such additional enquiry on this subject as may be necessary to enable them to include in their general report an expression of opinion as to the grounds of complaint and the best means of affording a remedy, should the complaint appear well founded.

I have the honor to be,
SIR,
Your most obedient Servant,

S. C. BAYLEY,

Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

To

THE SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

SIR,

I have the honor by desire of the Directors of the Bengal Tea Company "Limited" to state that having failed to obtain able-bodied men from coolie contractors the company have recently started an Agency in conjunction with other parties for securing the services of good laborers for their plantations in Cachar. They have however,

met with great difficulty owing to the recent orders of the Medical Inspector of Labor Transport for engaging first class native doctors to proceed with the coolies and to be subject to his approval before the coolies are despatched. On a recent occasion they were obliged to detain in their depôt a gang of coolies for upwards of ten days for want of a doctor Several native doctors intended for the purpose were sent to Doctor Macnamara, but they were all rejected by him, though among them there was one Golam Mortoga, who not only holds a Medical College Diploma, but also possesses good certificates from various Medical Officers. With much difficulty the company eventually succeeded in having a man passed to proceed with the coolies in question. The company have made the necessary arrangements for the despatch of coolies from their depôt once every month, but they have found it impossible to obtain so many native doctors of the description required by Doctor Macnamara. The detention of the coolies in depôt entails a serious expenditure on the company. They are moreover mostly of a class (Junglee men) who do not like Calcutta, and when detained in the depôt longer than the stipulated period, they not unfrequently abscond and thus a further loss is entailed.

2nd.—Under these circumstances I am desired to solicit that either the rule in respect to the appointment of native doctors to proceed with coolies may be modified to a certain extent to suit the circumstances of the case, or that the company may be favored with native doctors from the Medical Staff of Government, whenever they may be in need of their services on giving a week's previous notice, and on payment of a certain reasonable remuneration for each journey.

CALCUTTA,
8th February 1861.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) A. H. BLECHYNDEN,

Secretary Bengal Tea Company "Limited."

(True Copy)

THOMAS JONES,

Registrar Bengal Secretariat.